

TRUTHS AND MYTHS OF THE NATIVITY

How the story of Jesus was born



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REVEALED



**FOUL FISH AND
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THE SMELLS OF
GEORGIAN ENGLAND**

Secrets of the Tudor Court

The public and private
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The 1960s in pictures



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THIS MONTH WE'VE LEARNED...

On an average day, Henry VIII and his courtiers consumed between 4,500 and 5,000 calories – more than twice the daily intake recommended today. See page 26

Henry VIII was a man who appreciated a good dinner

Tudor truths



Of all British monarchs, **Henry VIII** is probably one of the most intriguing. His dogged determination to secure the continuity of the Tudor dynasty saw him marry six times and plunge the country into religious upheaval. Yet beneath the outward show of splendour and power lay a man crippled with insecurity and paranoia. In this month's cover feature (p26), Tracy Borman goes behind the scenes at the Tudor court to explore the private side of Henry VIII and discover what day-to-day life in the king's entourage would have been like.

Elsewhere, with the festive season upon us, we take a closer look at the **story of the Nativity** to find out what history can tell us about the birth of Jesus (p57). You can also read the incredible story of Ada Blackjack, the Iñupiat woman who survived **two years marooned on an Arctic island** (p43), as well as examine the work and legacy of **America's Founding Fathers** (p67). And we'll be casting our minds back to **the 1960s** with a series of images that capture English life at that time, as seen through the lens of photographer Tony Ray-Jones (p50).

If that's not enough to whet your historical appetite, we'll be exploring some of the potent – and pungent – **smells that engulfed the streets of Georgian England** – from rancid meat to toxic tobacco (p37). Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year – see you in 2020!

If that's not enough to whet your historical appetite, we'll be exploring some of the potent – and pungent – **smells that engulfed the streets of Georgian England** – from rancid meat to toxic tobacco (p37).

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year – see you in 2020!

Charlotte Hodgman
Editor

Charlotte

Don't miss our January issue, on sale 27 December

CONTRIBUTORS



Dan Jones
The author and historian shares his thoughts

on the Crusades, the Dissolution of the Monasteries... and Dick Whittington. *Page 17*



Tracy Borman
The historian, an expert on the Tudor

period, sheds light on the innermost workings of Henry VIII's royal court. *Page 26*



William Tullett
The author and historian introduces

us to the plethora of smells – and stinks – that could be found in Georgian England. *Page 37*

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USPS Identification Statement *BBC History Revealed* (ISSN 2632-6930) Christmas 2019 is published 13 times a year (monthly, with a Christmas issue in December) by Immediate Media Bristol, LTD, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 4ST, UK. Distributed in the US by NPS Media Group, 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton, CT 06484. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is Pending at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *BBC History Revealed*, PO Box 2015, Langhorne, PA 19047.

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Find out what *really* went on at Henry VIII's royal palaces



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Details on **p24**







1989 END OF TYRANNY

On 22 December 1989, 42 years of communist rule in Romania came to a bloody end with the overthrow – and later execution – of the country's leader, Communist Party General Secretary Nicolae Ceaușescu. His rule had been one of fear and suppression, characterised by austerity and food shortages, and by the time of the revolution – one of several to sweep across the Eastern Bloc in 1989 – his dictatorship had lost the support of the military. It is estimated that a little more than 1,000 people were killed during the protests that toppled Ceaușescu and the fighting that followed.

BBC
RADIO



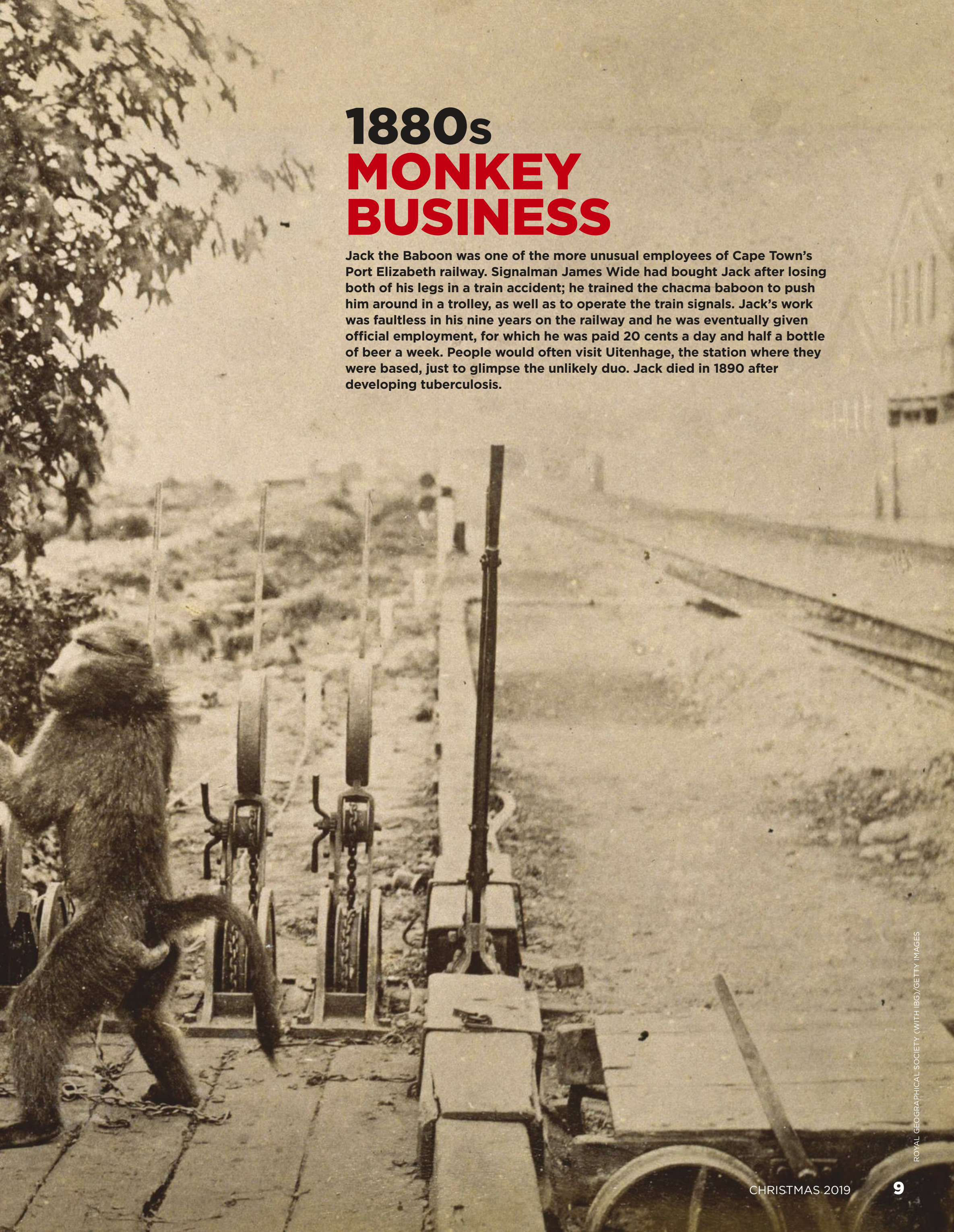
Tessa Dunlop looks back at the violent birth of post-communist Romania in *Romania Revolution: 30 Years On* on BBC Radio 4, scheduled for December

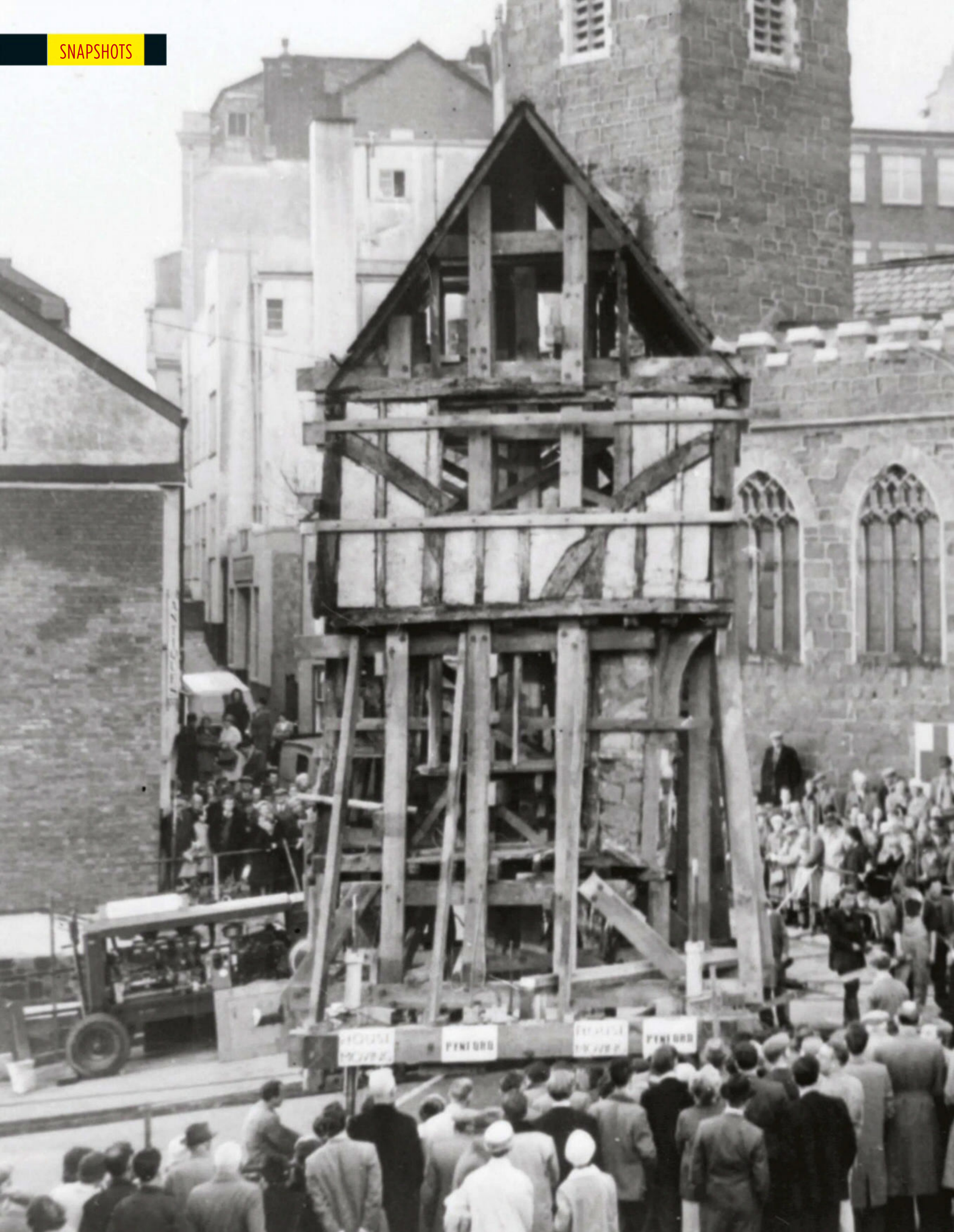
PETER TURNLEY/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES



1880s **MONKEY BUSINESS**

Jack the Baboon was one of the more unusual employees of Cape Town's Port Elizabeth railway. Signalman James Wide had bought Jack after losing both of his legs in a train accident; he trained the chacma baboon to push him around in a trolley, as well as to operate the train signals. Jack's work was faultless in his nine years on the railway and he was eventually given official employment, for which he was paid 20 cents a day and half a bottle of beer a week. People would often visit Uitenhage, the station where they were based, just to glimpse the unlikely duo. Jack died in 1890 after developing tuberculosis.







1961 TUDOR TRAVELS

In December 1961, the residents of Exeter witnessed an extraordinary sight: a 15th-century Tudor house being moved 220 feet along the road. The reason for this short shift was to make way for a new road; the building was so loved by residents and historians that the council decided to keep it. The building was stripped down to its wooden frame and moved on rollers over the space of a few days – to the delight of onlookers and the national media. It has since been known as ‘The House that Moved’.

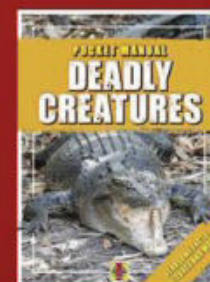
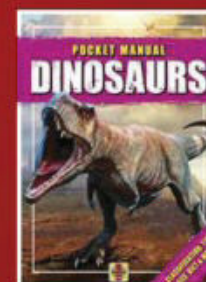
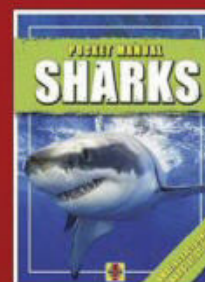
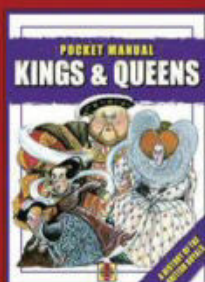
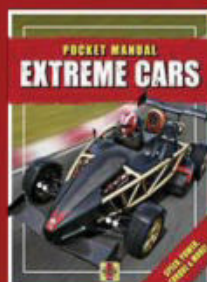
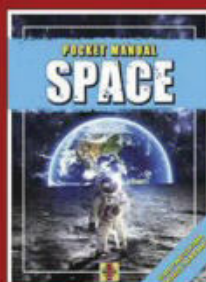
Visit the British Film Institute website to watch the perilous journey of ‘The House that Moved’. <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-the-house-that-moved-1961-online>



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HISTORY IN THE NEWS



MAIN: The face of Skeleton 125 (SK125), who lived in Aberdeen

INSET: The skull that provided the basis for SK125's reconstruction

FACE OF MEDIEVAL MAN RECONSTRUCTED

The 600-year-old Aberdeen skeleton has been brought back to life

The face of a man from medieval Aberdeen has been seen for the first time in 600 years. Facial reconstruction technology and analysis of the bones of the man known as Skeleton 125 (SK125) have brought him back to life. The skeleton was one of 60 complete examples found in 2015 during excavations at the site of Aberdeen Art Gallery.

AOC Archaeology Group has reconstructed the man's face. It estimates that at his death he was more than 46 years old and between 159cm and 166cm tall – making him slightly shorter than average for a man of his era.

Testing has revealed that SK125 suffered from extensive dental disease, including lost teeth and an abscess, and also had signs of ageing from joint disease. Researchers also think that, while SK125 spent his last few years in Aberdeen, he was not local to the area and may have been from the northwest Highlands or the Outer Hebrides. This was revealed by testing the composition of SK125's bones to determine his likely diet.

Doctor Paula Milburn from AOC Archaeology Group said, "SK125 has provided us with a first fascinating glimpse of one of the people buried

on the site of Aberdeen Art Gallery over 600 years ago. The ongoing post-excavation work is examining the remains in detail and will provide us with amazing information on the kind of people buried here, including their ages, gender, health and lifestyles."

Human bone fragments from at least 381 individuals were also discovered at the site, with the remains dating from between 1050 and 1410. The Aberdeen Art Gallery was built on the site of a 13th-century church and friary in 1885. The gallery reopened on 2 November following a renovation project that cost more than £30 million.



COLOUR PHOTO

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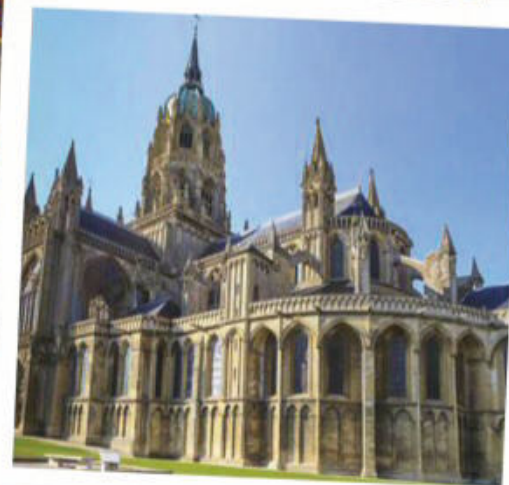


TIME CAPSULE: 1697

A book of fairytales takes its first bow.....p22



A light display at Bayeux Cathedral shows the tapestry in its original context



BAYEUX TAPESTRY MYSTERY SOLVED

Historians can finally stop squabbling about the tapestry's first home

The original intended location for the world's most famous tapestry has been revealed. The Bayeux Tapestry, depicting the 1066 Battle of Hastings, has long baffled historians due to its oddly long and thin shape – it is 231ft long but just 20 inches tall.

Records show that, in the 15th century, the tapestry was on display in Bayeux Cathedral. Experts now believe it was created specifically for the cathedral's nave when it was made in the 11th century.

Christopher Norton, Professor of Art History at the University of York, has discovered that the tapestry fits perfectly when hung along the north, south and west sides of the cathedral's nave. For many years, there have been debates between historians over precisely where the

tapestry was intended to hang, and whether this location was in England or France.

Thought to have been commissioned by the half-brother of William the Conqueror, Bishop Odo, it's thought that it was made by nuns in Canterbury. It depicts the battle for the English crown between Harold Godwinson and William.

The tapestry has been moved several times over the centuries. It returned to Bayeux in 1945, where it is now housed in a dedicated museum. The tapestry is due to visit Britain soon, after the French president, Emmanuel Macron, made the promise to loan it last year. It will be the first time it has left France.

BRITISH OUTPOST HALTED NUCLEAR WAR

A hidden GCHQ outpost in Scarborough played a vital and previously unknown role during the Cuban missile crisis.

Believed to be the longest continually running listening station in the world, the outpost was established just before World War I because of its perfect location for intercepting German naval radio signals from the North Sea.

In 1962, as tensions between the Soviet Union and the West escalated, and the threat of nuclear war loomed, the Scarborough station was given an important yet secret mission.

The US believed the Soviet Union was stationing nuclear missiles in Cuba and reacted by creating a naval blockade. Operators at Scarborough were able to intercept ships' messages and work out precisely where ships carrying weapons to the Caribbean were headed.



The outpost's contribution is covered in a BBC Radio 4 series *The Secret History of GCHQ*, which is available on BBC Sounds at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0009jjh



A bunker at GCHQ Scarborough, located on Irton Moor on the outskirts of the town

FRANCO'S BODY REBURIED

The body of former Spanish dictator Francisco Franco has been moved to a more modest grave 44 years after his death. The current government states that the reburial is in accordance with a pledge made not to glorify the fascist ruler.

Franco was originally interred in 1975 in a mausoleum alongside those killed during the Spanish Civil War. This was seen as controversial by families of those killed during the conflict, who thought it was wrong that people killed by Franco's troops were buried alongside him.

He has been laid to rest in a private Madrid cemetery next to his wife.

20 TONNES

The total combined weight of 14 restored ship figureheads from the 19th century. They will go on display in 2020 at The Box, Plymouth.

HENRY VIII'S DIVORCE LED TO 'COPY-CAT SPLITS'

At the same time Henry VIII was trying to have his marriage to first wife Catherine of Aragon declared void, others were using his case to help their own, according to new research. Experts from the University of Exeter and Bangor University have uncovered legal records relating to Edward Griffith, a Welsh member of the landed gentry. He was given permission to marry his late wife's sister, Agnes, but later left her and married another woman, Jane. Edward returned once more to Agnes before settling down with Jane. The king's annulment was referred to in Edward's court proceedings.

TIME PIECE

A look at everyday objects from the past

GLIDING ACROSS THE PAST

Ice skating was once a matter of life or death rather than winter fun

The winter pastime of ice skating has been around for 3,000 years, but it wasn't always a leisure pursuit. In places such as Scandinavia and Canada, skating was once used as a way to move goods for trading and to navigate frozen lakes. The medieval ice skate pictured below is from an animal bone and was found in London. Between the 14th and 19th centuries, the River Thames froze many times allowing Frost Fairs to spring up. Revellers would enjoy visiting hastily constructed pubs, shops and ice skating rinks set up on the frozen river.



A 12th-century skate made from an animal bone. Leather laces were used to tie these skates to the feet

© MUSEUM OF LONDON

CENTRAL PARK TO HAVE ITS FIRST STATUE HONOURING WOMEN

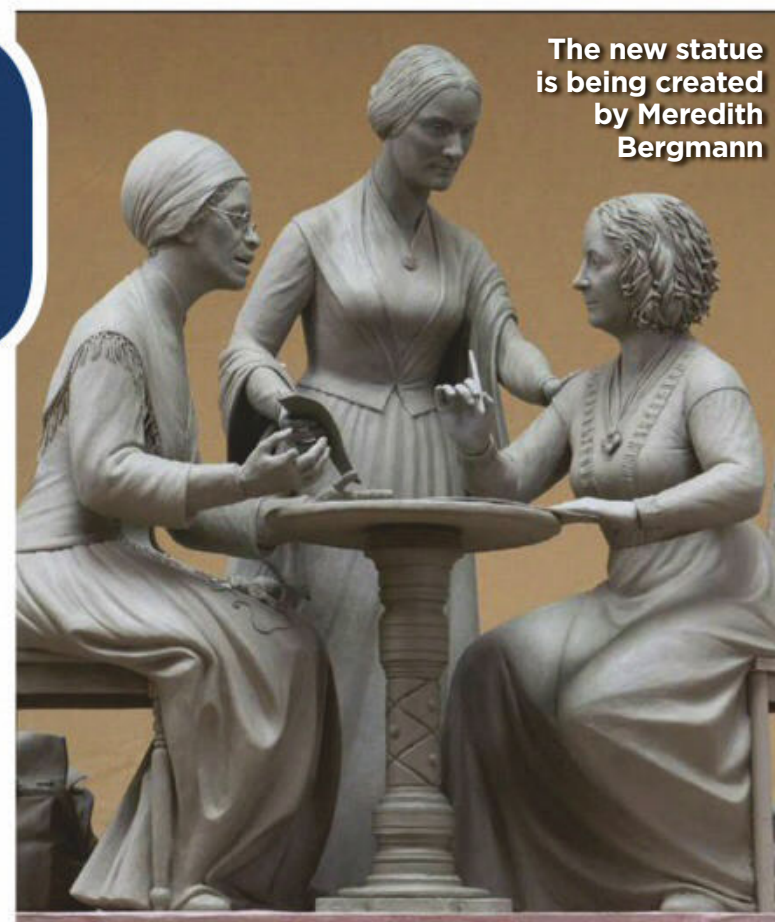
The New York park is full of monuments celebrating men through history, but no women

New York's Central Park is to have its first statue honouring the achievements of women. The famous park in Manhattan boasts 23 statues of men who have made a contribution to history, from playwright William Shakespeare to Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, but none commemorating famous women. There is, however, a statue of the fictional character Alice, from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

A city commission recently voted to erect a new statue honouring three pioneers in

the fight for women's rights: activist Susan B Anthony, suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and escaped slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth.

The statue, located on the Mall, a promenade lined with elm trees, is set to be unveiled in August 2020 – in time for the centenary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. The original plans were for two statues – of Anthony and Cady – but these were revised after criticism that no African-American suffragists had been included.



The new statue is being created by Meredith Bergmann

HISTORY IN COLOUR

Colourised photographs that bring the past to life



AMAZON DEFENCE CORPS, 1940

In May 1940, the Home Guard was established in Britain as a civilian 'last line of defence' against German invasion. This voluntary organisation was mainly made up of men who were unfit or ineligible for military service. Women were prevented from joining the Home Guard until 1943 (and even then were only recruited in non-combatant roles), so many created their own 'unofficial' defence groups. Here, women of the Amazon Defence Corps are being given weapons training, with canes, sticks and umbrellas standing in for rifles.

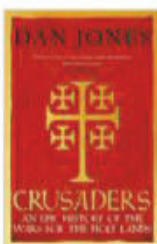
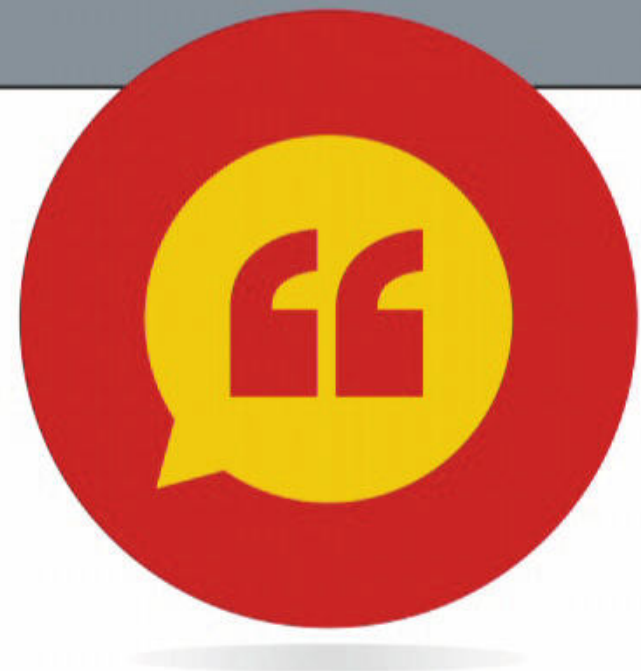
See more colourised pictures by Marina Amaral [@marinamaral2](#)



YOUR HISTORY

Dan Jones

The writer, historian and TV presenter wants to make sure we know Dick Whittington was so much more than a “political sockpuppet for his cat”



Crusaders: An Epic History of the Wars for the Holy Lands by Dan Jones, charts the religious conflicts through the stories of those on both sides.

BBC TWO Dan Jones has contributed to BBC historical documentaries including *1066: A Year to Conquer England*.

Q If you could turn back the clock, which single event in history would you want to change?

I hope readers will excuse me the duty of rubbing Hitler out of the history books before birth, or redirecting Mao to pursue a career as a Buddhist monk. I would prevent the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s, an act of hideous vandalism levelled on the fabric of the medieval Church in England, which has robbed us today of great buildings, books and art. It was the physical expression of Henry VIII's worst impulses, and a crying shame.

Q If you could meet any figure from history, who would it be?

I've just finished writing about the Crusades, and there was one character I fell in love with. Margaret of Beverley was a Yorkshire lass who went to Jerusalem on pilgrimage in the 1180s and became caught up in the war

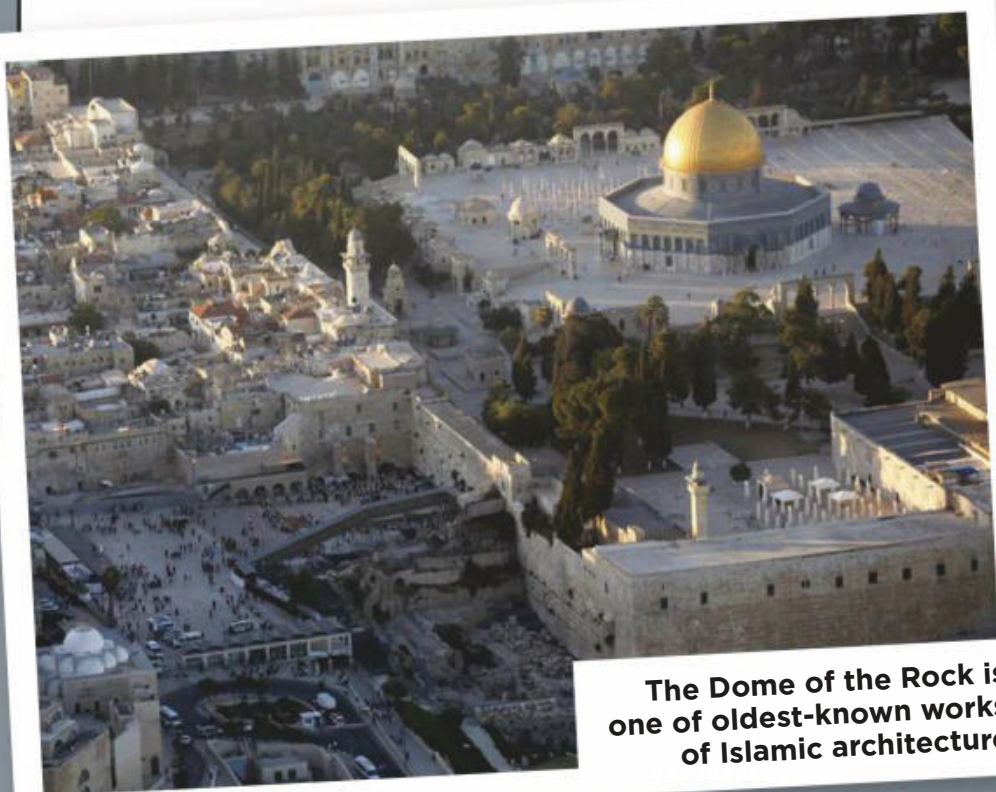
against Saladin. She was there when Jerusalem fell, throwing rocks at Saladin's troops from the ramparts while wearing a saucepan helmet. She wrote a somewhat embellished account of her escapades. I'd like to hear the unvarnished version, and find out if she still had that saucepan.

Q If you could visit any historical landmark in the world tomorrow, where would you go?

I would choose to land on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and watch the Sun rise over the golden roof of the Dome of the Rock. I had an extraordinary time in Jerusalem and came a bit closer to understanding why, on medieval maps, this strange, mournful and beautiful city is so often depicted as literally the centre of the world.

Q Who is your unsung history hero?

I've always had a major man-crush on Dick Whittington, the merchant and London mayor who lived at the turbulent turn of the 15th century. He was a proper medieval titan, a brilliant businessman and politician who survived a number of violent regime changes in England, helped raise funding for Henry V's Agincourt campaign, and championed progressive causes in London such as building sparkling new public toilets over the Thames. When he died in 1423, Whittington left so much money to charity that there are still people today who live in social housing subsidised by his estate. Yet most of us only know him as the lad with the knapsack who was really just a political sockpuppet for his cat. It's a sin.



The Dome of the Rock is one of oldest-known works of Islamic architecture

“I’ve always had a major man-crush on Dick Whittington”

DAILY SKETCH, THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1915.

GAOL IS THE HOME FOR THE HUN IN WAR TIME.

DAILY SKETCH.

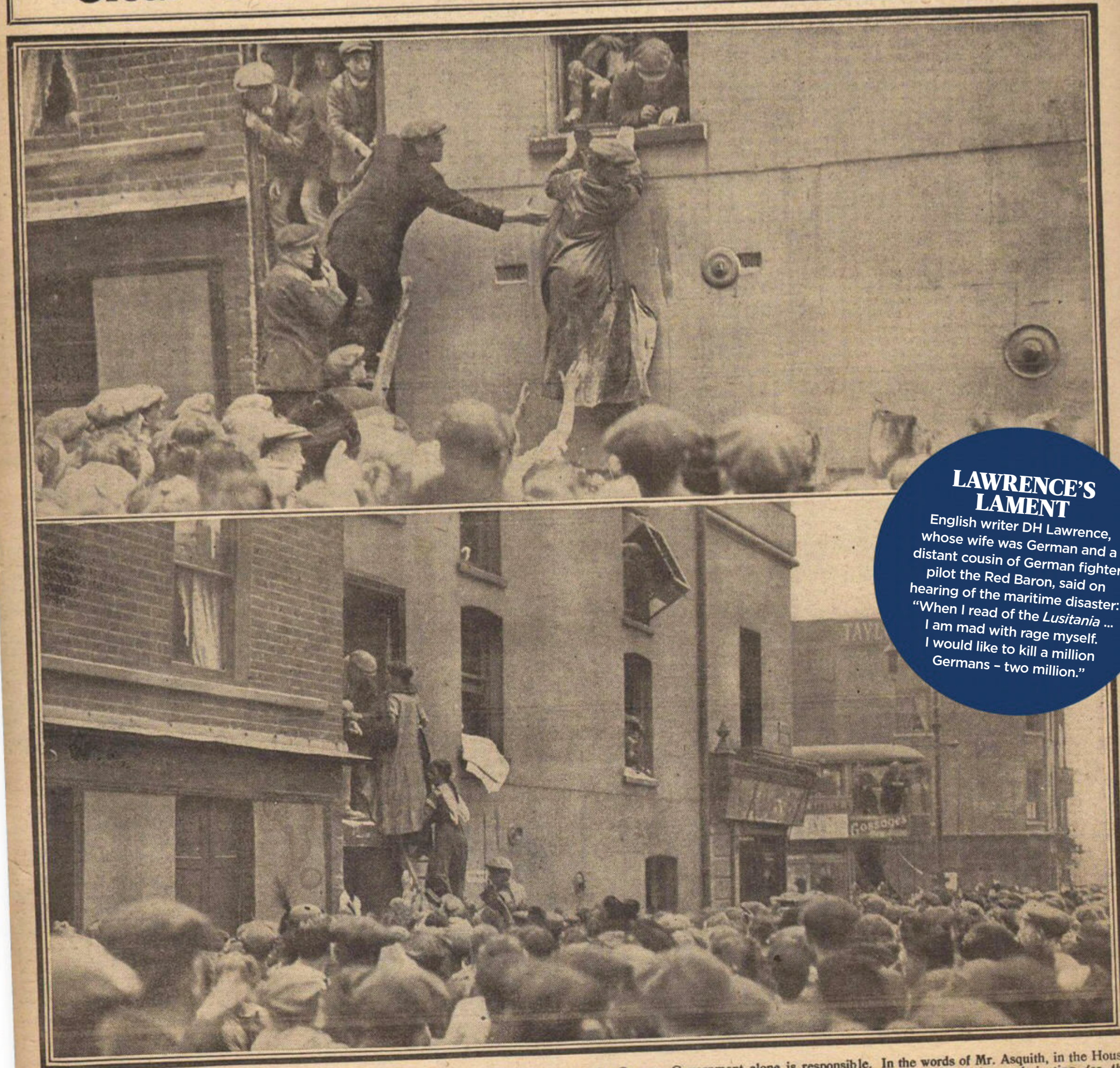
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LONDON, THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1915.

[Registered as a Newspaper.] ONE HALFPENNY.

Clear Out The Germans, Say The People.



LAWRENCE'S LAMENT

English writer DH Lawrence, whose wife was German and a distant cousin of German fighter pilot the Red Baron, said on hearing of the maritime disaster: "When I read of the *Lusitania* ... I am mad with rage myself. I would like to kill a million Germans - two million."

For the anti-German scenes which took place in London and all over England yesterday the German Government alone is responsible. In the words of Mr. Asquith, in the House of Commons, "No one could be surprised that after the progressive violation by the enemy of the usages of civilised war and the rules of humanity—culminating for the moment in the sinking of the *Lusitania*—there had arisen a feeling of righteous indignation among all classes in this country for which it would be difficult to find a parallel." The above pictures were taken during attacks on shops in Poplar, which was the scene of fierce anti-Teuton outbursts.—(Daily Sketch Photographs.)

YESTERDAY'S PAPERS

Another timeless front page from the archives

A German salesman is escorted from London's Smithfield Market in July 1915

GERMANS IN BRITAIN FACE PERSECUTION AND VIOLENCE

After the sinking of the *Lusitania*, hostility towards German communities intensifies

As the battles of World War I raged on mainland Europe, a conflict of a different sort was brewing back in Britain. Anti-German sentiment, steadily on the rise since the British declaration of war in August 1914, bloomed into open violence in May 1915, with riots rippling across Liverpool and Manchester before spreading to London. German-owned shops and businesses were attacked, and mobs terrorised German families, chasing them into the streets and in some instances even ripping the clothes off their backs.

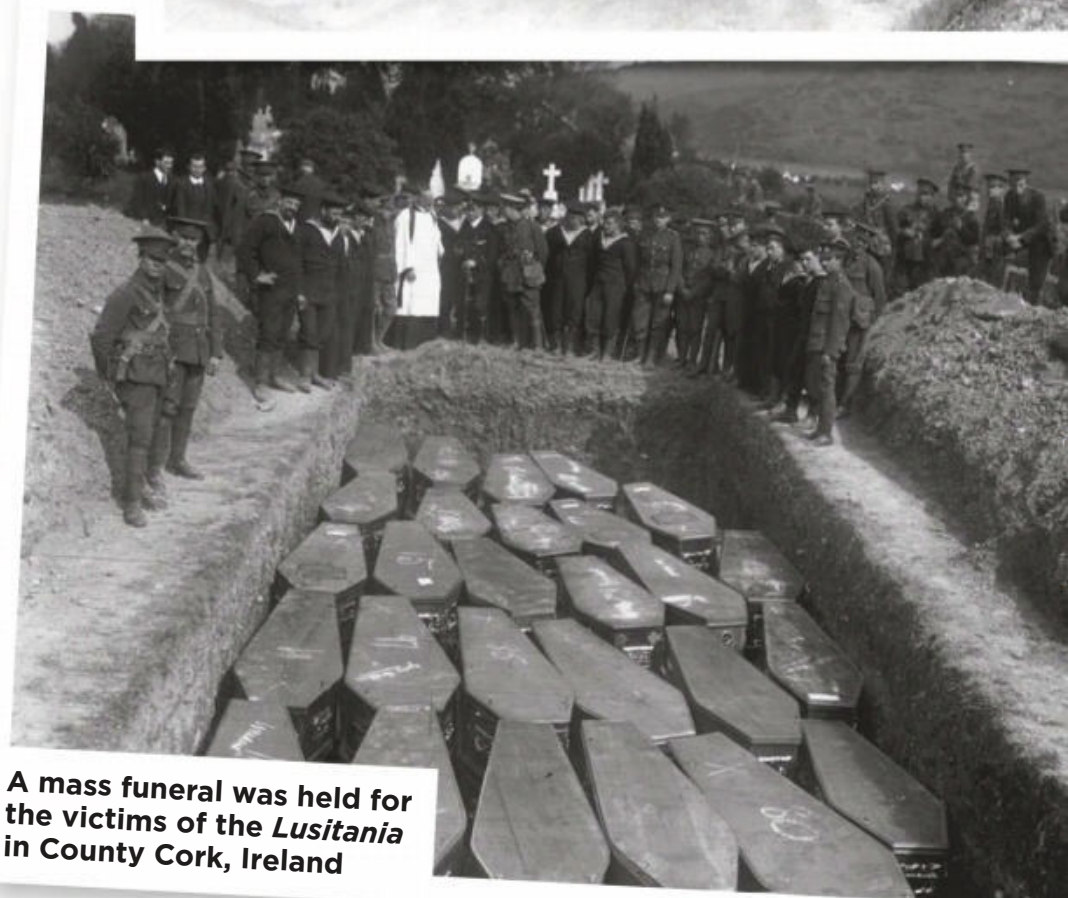
The flashpoint for this unruly xenophobia was one of the most infamous off-battlefield episodes of the war, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915. On 7 May, the unarmed British passenger liner was sailing from Liverpool to New York when it was torpedoed off the Irish coast by a German submarine. It sank within 20 minutes; 1,198 people onboard were killed. The German submarine commander justified the attack because the *Lusitania* was carrying a cargo of war munitions, and because Germany had declared the waters around the British Isles a war zone earlier that year.

Germans were one of the largest minority communities in London and many had well-established businesses, but even before the sinking they were being made into pariahs. People who had lived in Britain for decades suddenly found themselves shunned by neighbours and prevented from buying goods in markets they had visited for years. German businesses were boycotted, national newspapers ran campaigns that

led to the dismissal of German staff in restaurants and hotels, and rumours had begun to spread that all Germans living in Britain must be spies.

When the fate of the *Lusitania* made headline news, the fires of ill feeling were stoked anew. People were shocked at the unprovoked attack, and the German community bore the brunt of their anger. In just 24 hours, the London riots caused more damage than had been inflicted over the course of several days elsewhere in the country. In fact, almost all police districts in London reported violence and disorder in the days following the sinking.

More was to come. On 31 May 1915, Germany carried out its first Zeppelin raid on London, killing seven people and encouraging yet more violence against businesses and families with Germanic-sounding names. By November 1915, more than 30,000 foreign nationals, Germans among them, had been interned in camps, the result of laws passed in 1914 giving the government the power to intern or deport adult male foreign nationals. The laws also required all foreign citizens living in Britain to register with the police and restricted to where they could live.



A mass funeral was held for the victims of the *Lusitania* in County Cork, Ireland

So strong was the hatred towards Germany that it even affected the British Royal family, who were of German ancestry. On 17 July 1917, George V was persuaded to appease the public and change the royal family's house name from Saxe-Coburg and Gotha to Windsor and relinquish their German titles. 

THIS MONTH IN... 1843

Anniversaries that have made history

DICKENS PUBLISHES A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The author immortalises the picture-perfect Victorian Christmas in his festive ghost story with a heart

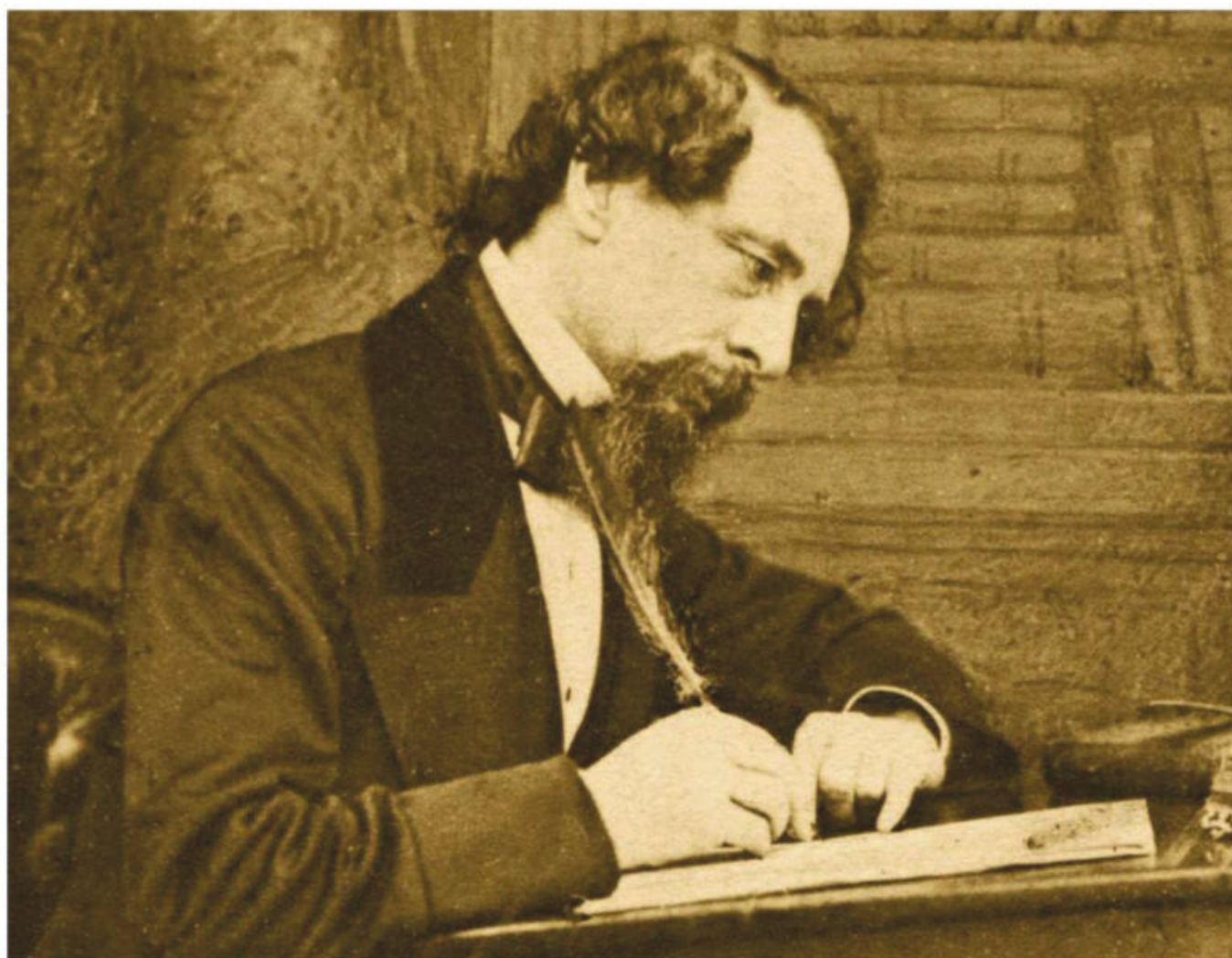
In 1843, with his fifth child on the way, popular English writer and social critic Charles Dickens needed to publish a new bestseller to support his growing family, so he began writing a ghost story – one that would become *A Christmas Carol*.

Dickens's motives were wider than simply telling a good story and the obvious financial benefits. The author had recently embarked on a tour of northern England, where he had witnessed the struggles of everyday life for Britain's poor. He had also been moved by his visits to Ragged schools – free charity schools that educated destitute children. In *A Christmas Carol*, Dickens found a subtle way of highlighting the plight of the poor.

Written in just six weeks, Dickens financed the book's publication himself due to a dispute with his publishers. The price was set at five shillings, so virtually everyone could afford it, and it proved so popular that around 6,000 copies were sold in a matter of days.

It's the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly moneylender who hates Christmas and cares for nobody except himself. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of his dead business partner, Jacob Marley, who warns him that if he continues down his path of greed and selfishness, he will spend eternity in torment like Marley. Scrooge is then visited by three spirits of Christmas – past, present and future. He witnesses the hardships suffered by the family of Bob Cratchit (his underpaid clerk) and is shown what the Cratchits' future might be without Scrooge's help – poverty and the untimely death of the sickly Tiny Tim.

Horried at seeing his own, unmourned death, and the fates of those around him due to his carelessness, Scrooge eventually repents. He gives money to charity, spends



***A Christmas Carol* was not Charles Dickens's first lauded work – by 1843, he'd also penned *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *The Old Curiosity Shop*, to name a few**

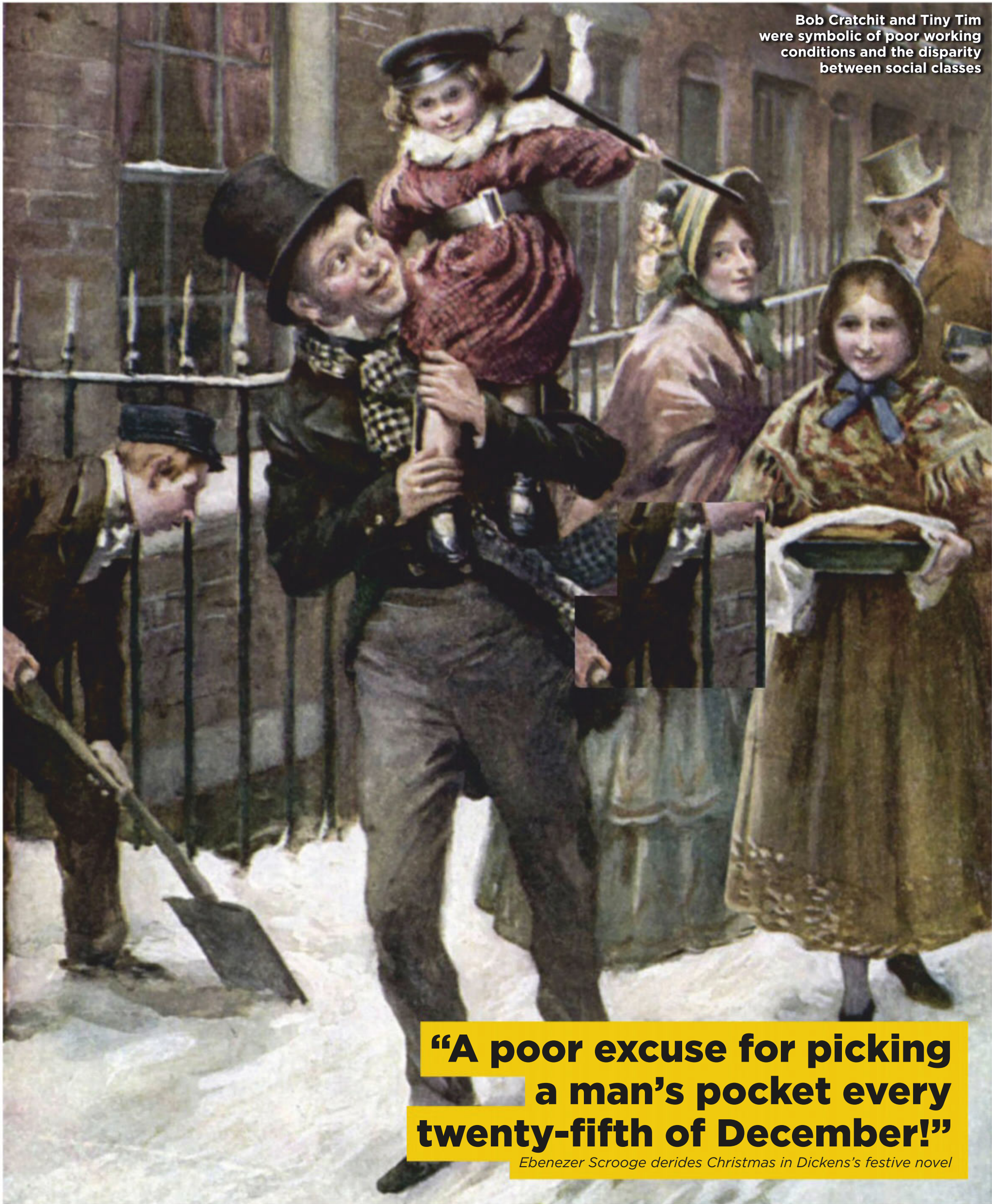
Christmas with his family, sends a turkey to the Cratchit family and gives Bob a pay rise. The new Scrooge is described as a good man who embodies the true spirit of Christmas. It's believed that parts of the novel were inspired by Dickens's own life: as a 12-year-old, around the time that his father was in debtors' prison, he'd been forced into work, while Tiny Tim is thought to have been based on Dickens's own nephew – who did not survive childhood.

By the time of its publication, Christmas had become a sedate one-day affair – a far cry

from the medieval Christmases that involved days of feasting and merriment. Dickens's festive novel encouraged a reinvigoration of the holiday season. The tale conjures up the image of a perfect and nostalgic Victorian Christmas, full of turkey, mistletoe and goodwill; it remains so ingrained in popular culture that, even today, people who are stingy or miserly are often given the nickname of Scrooge. 📺



A new adaptation of Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is due to air on BBC One this Christmas (see page 86)



Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim were symbolic of poor working conditions and the disparity between social classes

“A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December!”
Ebenezer Scrooge derides Christmas in Dickens’s festive novel

YEAR IN FOCUS 1697

Snapshots of the world from one year in the past



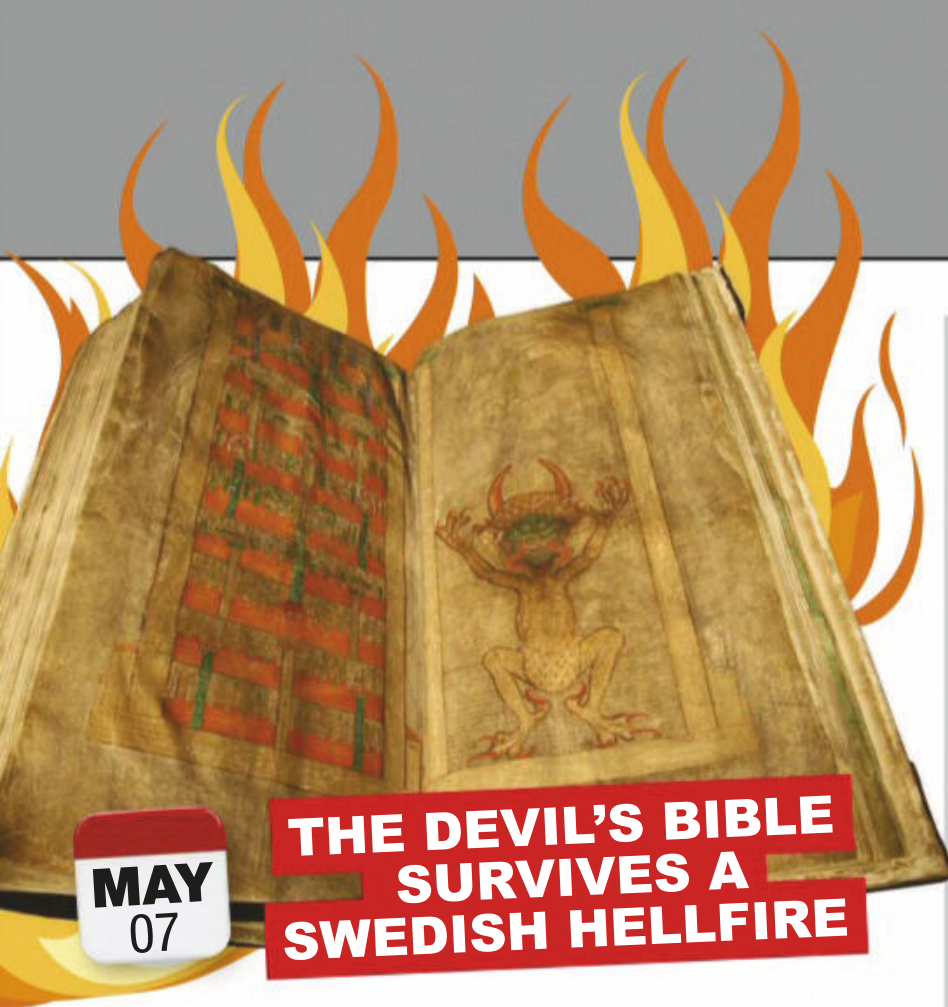
**DURING
JAN**

THE FAIRYTALE GENRE COMES ALIVE

French writer Charles Perrault (*right*) publishes a collection of stories – under his son's name to avoid criticism – that would become some of the most beloved of all time. His 1697 collection, known as *Tales from Past Times with Morals* or *Mother Goose Tales*, included *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots* and *Cinderella*. These adaptations

of long-forgotten folk tales popularised a nascent literary genre – the fairytale. Perrault's stories were moralistic with Christian influences and became popular in the French court. His stories influenced German writing duo, the Brothers Grimm, who would write their own set of fairytales more than 100 years later.

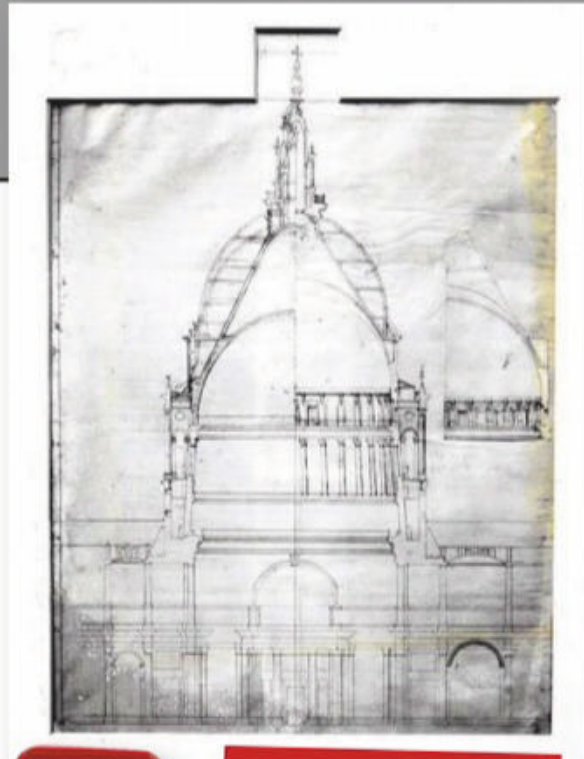




MAY
07

THE DEVIL'S BIBLE SURVIVES A SWEDISH HELLFIRE

Of all the books to survive the fiery inferno that ripped through Stockholm's Tre Kronor Castle on 7 May, the *Devil's Bible* is perhaps the most aptly named. The tome, officially the *Codex Gigas*, is the largest medieval illuminated manuscript in the world and is believed to date to 13th-century Bohemia. The tale behind its satanic sobriquet is a two-hander: legend has it that the scribe who inked the codex made a pact with the Devil in order to complete it, and the book contains a prominent – and unusual – full-page image of the Devil himself. The book escaped the conflagration by being hefted out of a window – an impressive feat given that it's 8.7 inches thick and weighs around 75 kilograms.



DEC
02

ST PAUL'S RISES FROM THE ASHES

The first service is held in the fifth (and current) iteration of St Paul's Cathedral on 2 December, freshly consecrated following the 1666 Great Fire of London. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren – who had spent nine years planning the Baroque masterpiece – it replaced a cathedral estimated to have been built sometime between 1087 and 1314. Even by 1697, it still wasn't completely finished, with work continuing through to 1711.

DURING
MAR

THE LAST OF THE MAYA KINGDOMS FALLS

Some 200 years after the conquests of the New World began, the last independent Mesoamerican kingdom succumbs to the Spanish. Petén Itzá – in modern-day Guatemala – was a Mayan kingdom based around the island city of Nojpetén (today it's modern-day Flores, *left*). It had been inhabited by the Itzá since the 15th century, when they had fled from the Yucatan. The Spanish had tried to conquer it before, in 1622, an endeavour that morphed into an unmitigated disaster for the invaders, but by the mid 1690s they were ready to try again. This time they were successful, launching the decisive assault on Nojpetén on 13 March. Under colonial rule, the Itzá population dwindled, many falling victim to disease.



ALSO IN 1697...

8 JANUARY

Scottish student Thomas Aikenhead becomes the last person in Britain to be executed for blasphemy – he reportedly ridiculed the Bible and Jesus.

15 MAY

The most intense hailstorm to hit Britain is recorded in Great Offley, Hertfordshire. Hailstones as big as fists are reported and a shepherd is killed.

10 JUNE

The last mass execution of accused witches in Western Europe takes place in Paisley, Scotland. Seven people – four women and three men – are found guilty of bewitching a young girl. Six were strangled and burned at the stake; the other committed suicide before the execution.

JULY

The first newspaper reference of a first-class county cricket match, involving Sussex and an unknown opponent, is printed.

30 OCTOBER

The Peace of Ryswick ends the Nine Years' War between Louis XIV's France and the 'Grand Alliance' of European nations.

DIED: 28 JANUARY JOHN FENWICK

Baronet and Jacobite John Fenwick was implicated in a plot to assassinate William III in 1696. When a legal technicality prevented him from being tried, the government passed an act of attainder, stripping Fenwick of his title and negating the need for a trial. He was beheaded on Tower Hill.



BORN: 10 NOVEMBER WILLIAM HOGARTH

Known for his satirical and sometimes bawdy paintings, English artist William Hogarth would often paint images that provided a moral message or social commentary. Among his most famous were 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane', created to condemn the evils of gin in favour of beer.



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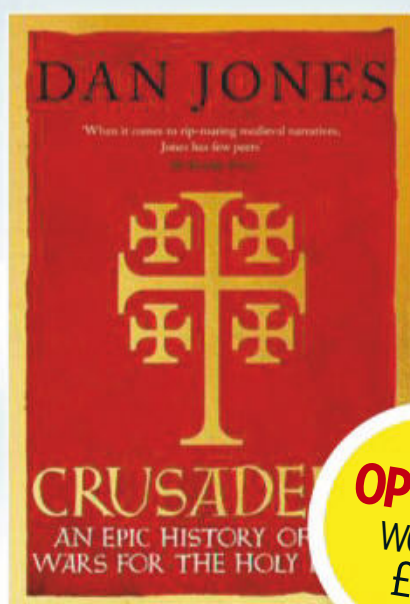
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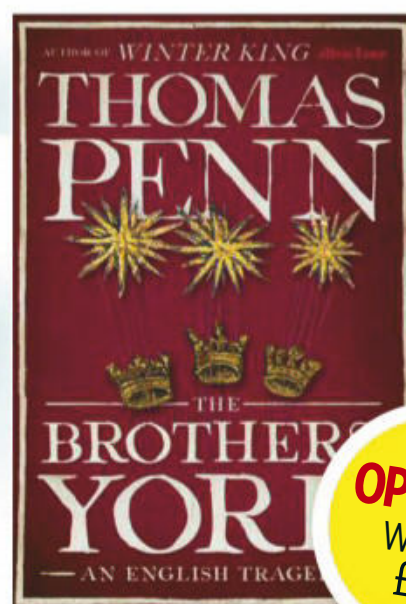


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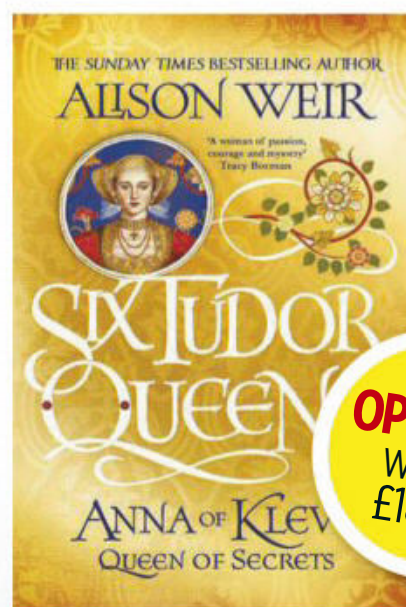


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TRACY BORMAN'S most recent book, *Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* (Hodder), was published in 2019. Tracy is also joint chief curator for Historic Royal Palaces, and has contributed to BBC programmes including BBC Two's *Armada: 12 Days To Save England*.



Secrets of the Tudor Court

What was life like for Henry VIII when he wasn't tearing down monasteries or wooing a new wife? **Tracy Borman** examines what went on day-to-day in the King's court – and why keeping up appearances was key to his hold on the throne



Complements
Lucy Worsley's
Tudor Christmas
on BBC Two,
scheduled for
December



Every day was a party for those lucky enough to live in Henry VIII's court

High up in the eaves of the spectacular ceiling of Hampton Court Palace's Great Hall, you can just see a series of painted faces staring down (*pictured right*). Although they are easy to miss, these 'eavesdroppers' (from which the word derives) were installed for a purpose: to remind all of the courtiers below that everything they said was overheard. There were no secrets at the Tudor court – or so Henry VIII liked to claim.

Henry's court was admired throughout the world for its splendour and magnificence. Visiting ambassadors were treated to dazzling spectacles of pageantry and ceremony, an endless stream of feasting, music and entertainments. In short, life was one long party for those who were lucky enough to live there. Beneath the dazzling veneer was a hive of activity, as hundreds of officials, attendants and servants laboured day and night to create this world-famous showpiece. Even on an average day, a vast amount of work was undertaken to keep the court looking – and smelling – good.

Everything was ordered with military precision and governed by a strict hierarchy. The royal household was divided into two sections. The household above stairs (the *Domus Magnificentiae*) comprised the Chamber, the Presence Chamber and the Privy Chamber, and was staffed by a far greater number of attendants than those 'below stairs'. This department was controlled by the



ABOVE: Whenever there was feasting, there would also be music and dancing

ABOVE LEFT: Carved 'eavesdroppers' observed clandestine goings-on at the Tudor court

“Henry's court was admired throughout the world for its magnificence”

Lord Chamberlain, who was usually a trusted and close friend of the monarch.

The household below stairs (the *Domus Providencie*) was controlled by the Lord Steward and divided into a number of sections such as the scullery, larder, pastry kitchen, buttery and cellar. The majority of staff who populated

these departments were men. The only women below stairs were employed to do the washing, cleaning and basic household tasks.

Outside the jurisdiction of both the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Steward were a number of miscellaneous departments, including the Jewel House, the Office of the Revels, the Office of Works, the Royal Ordnance and the Chapel Royal. The entire royal household was under the nominal direction of the Lord Great Chamberlain.

AN HONOUR TO SERVE

Service at court was not necessarily a menial profession. Many of the 'above

stairs' attendants, notably those who served the king in his private or 'privy' chamber, were members of the nobility. After all, the greatest prizes in the Tudor court were won through close and regular access to the sovereign. There were other perks, such as free board and lodging – not to mention some rather splendid uniforms. The highest-ranking attendants would be decked out in silks, satins, velvets and furs. The yeomen of the guard, meanwhile, had to be highly visible because their role carried the greatest weight of responsibility: namely 'to watch the king'. A scarlet livery was introduced for them in 1514 and has remained their uniform to this day. By contrast, little was provided for the below stairs staff because they were not seen by those who mattered.

Henry VIII had inherited an impressive suite of palaces from his father, Henry VII – notably Greenwich, Eltham, Richmond and Windsor. But still he wanted more. He would go on to become the most prolific builder of all the Tudor monarchs, ending his reign with 55 residences. One of Henry's most spectacular palaces was Nonsuch in Surrey. Designed as a celebration of the power of the Tudor dynasty, its name was a boast that there was no other palace like it in the world. Henry also transformed York Place into the huge, sprawling palace of Whitehall. Arguably his most famous palace, though, was Hampton Court, inherited like York Place from his close advisor Cardinal Wolsey. As soon as the King had got his hands on this magnificent Thames-side palace, he set about

CARDINAL'S SIN

Henry VIII came gained both York Place and Hampton Court from his erstwhile friend Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, who was both Archbishop of York and the King's chief minister. Wolsey drew Henry's ire over his failure to convince the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon.

making it even bigger – adding the jaw-dropping Great Hall, a new suite of royal apartments, an extensive tiltyard, a covered tennis court and other sporting facilities in order to create the perfect residence for pleasure and privacy.

By the time the King's works were completed, Hampton Court boasted no fewer than 800 rooms, all lavishly decorated with rich hangings and furniture. It was clearly designed to inspire awe.

PALATIAL PROGRESS

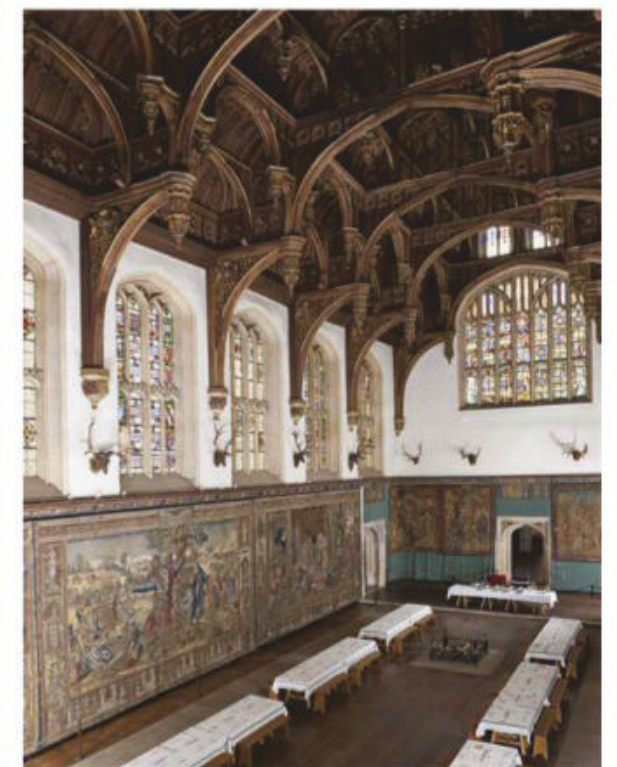
Henry and his court moved regularly between his many palaces. This was in the interests of practicality as well as public relations. The court regularly comprised between 400 and 1,000 people, all of whom needed food, drink, facilities to wash, go to the toilet and sleep, so it is little wonder that after a few weeks hosting the royal court, each palace needed a break. When the court had packed up and moved on to the next place, the

vacant palace would be thoroughly cleaned and fumigated, and the food supplies in the surrounding fields and farms would be replenished ready for the next visit.

When the King went on his annual progresses around the kingdom, he did not travel lightly. As well as taking hundreds of courtiers and attendants with him, there would be a long train of wagons loaded with his furnishings, beds, tapestries, and so on.

All of this excess was to a purpose. Although he has gone down in history as England's most formidable monarch, Henry VIII's claim to the throne did not bear close scrutiny. The Tudors were descended from an illegitimate line and there were others with a stronger claim. Henry was as painfully aware of this as his father had been, and therefore

Before it fell into Henry's hands, Hampton Court was the almost-regal pile of Cardinal Wolsey



Henry designed Hampton Court Palace's Great Hall to induce awe and wonder in his courtiers

These days there is nonsuch palace as Nonsuch Palace: it was destroyed in the 1680s and few contemporary drawings of it exist



A Tudor Christmas

Henry VIII was praised for keeping Christmas with “much nobleness and open court”, along with “great plenty of viands”. Greenwich Palace (the place of his birth in 1491) was the traditional location for the yuletide festivities. Hundreds of courtiers would flock there to eat, drink and be merry – and warm themselves by the huge Yule log that was lit on Christmas Eve. Twelve days of feasting and revelry would follow, all of equal excess and magnificence, with games, carols and even an appearance by Father (or ‘Captain’) Christmas. But the star of the show was always Henry, decked out in sumptuous new clothes every year.

Spare a thought for the royal cooks, who were obliged to prepare not just one Christmas dinner, but a whole host of sumptuous feasts on each of the Twelve Days. After an appetiser of plum porridge or figgy pudding, a boar’s head would be carried in smeared with mustard and with a roasted apple in its mouth. Next came a variety of rich meats, including larks, quails, capons, soused veal and – the favourite for all classes – brawn, which comprised fatty cuts of richly spiced boar meat or pork.

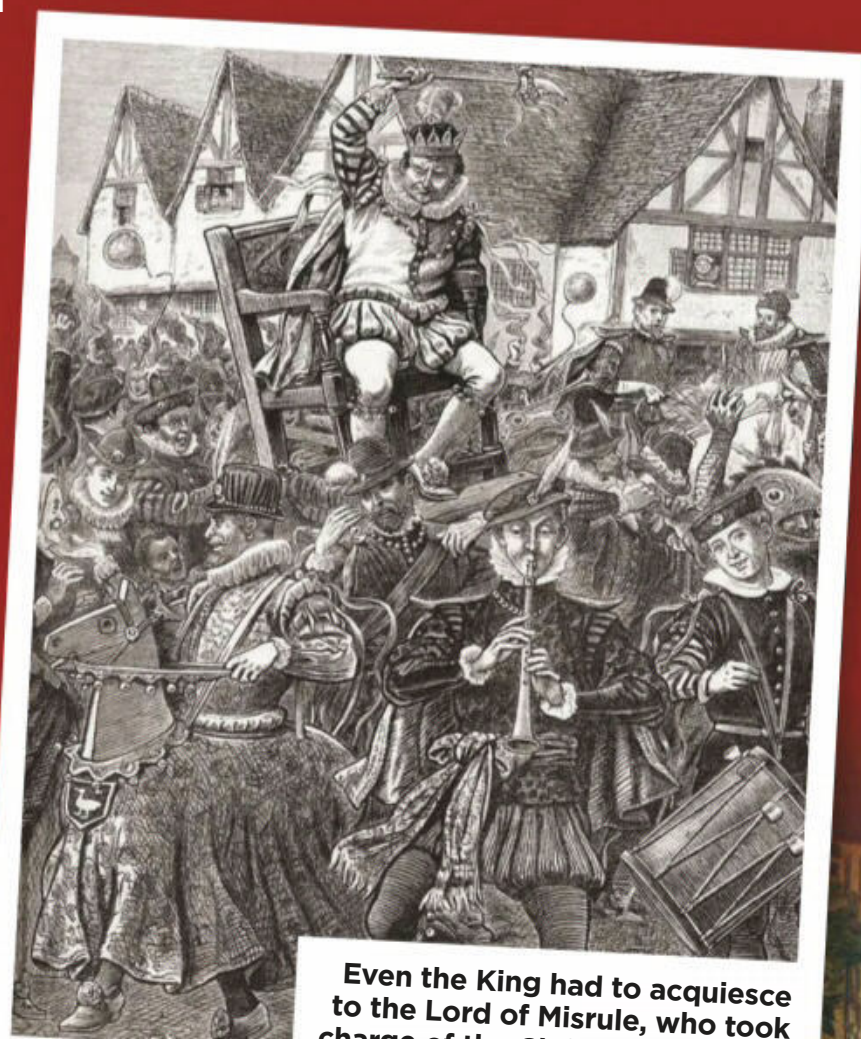
For dessert, there was Christmas pudding (similar to suet pudding) or ‘frumenty’, which was made with eggs, fruit, spices, almond milk and cream. Also popular were jellies moulded into castles or animals, or spectacular sugar sculptures, sometimes carved into suggestive shapes in order to excite lust. Mince pies were also served, but they contained shredded leftover meats. All of this was washed down with French wine or specially brewed Christmas ale.

The feasting and revelry was presided over not by the King, but the ‘Lord of Misrule’. Even Henry had to bow to his authority. In the first year of his reign, the role was filled by Will Wynesbury, who cheekily asked the King for £5 towards his expenses. Fortunately, his royal master appreciated the joke.

Gifts were exchanged on New Year’s Day. Henry encouraged his courtiers to come bearing lavish gifts, which would be given to him during a special ceremony in his presence chamber. His nobles would vie with each other to give the most valuable or admired present. Cardinal Wolsey once gave his master

a gold cup worth £100 (more than £50,000 in today’s money). Some of the more unusual gifts that Henry received included dog collars, six cheeses from Suffolk and a marmoset monkey.

But the true message of Christmas was never lost. Henry prided himself on being a devout and pious king, and made sure that his courtiers attended a series of solemn ceremonies.



Even the King had to acquiesce to the Lord of Misrule, who took charge of the Christmas revelries

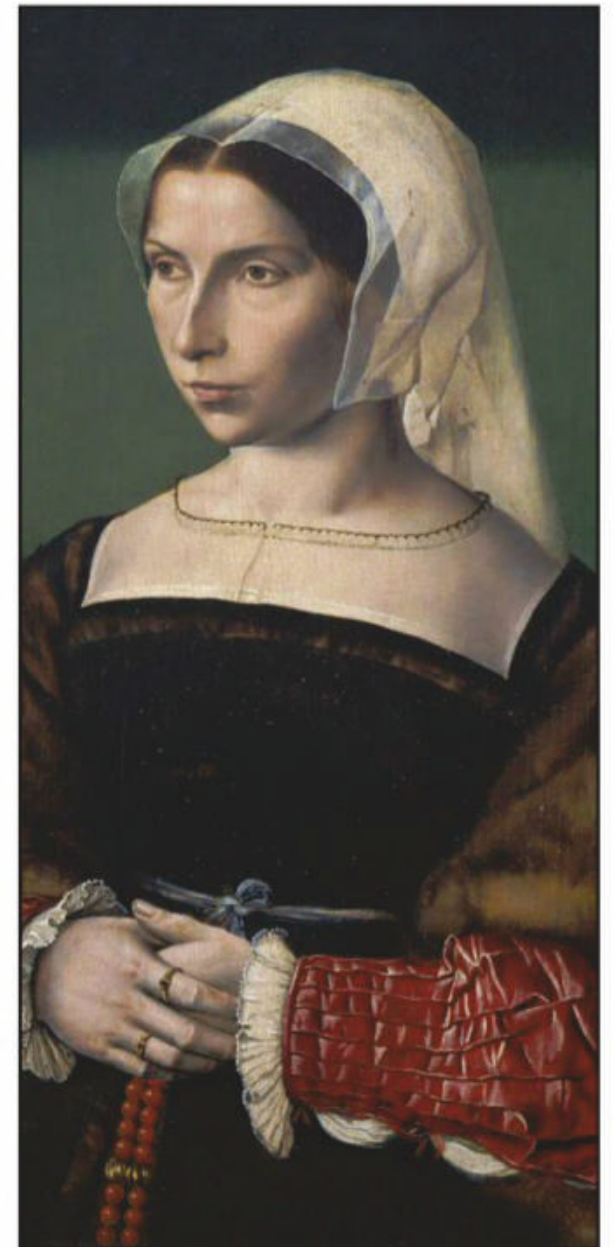


The Yule log was very much an entire tree – it needed to be that large to burn for 12 days



LEFT: The Groom of the Stool helped Henry use a portable toilet like this – a close stool. Such was the intimacy of the role that the groom was often a close confidant

BELOW: Anne Hastings, the Duke of Buckingham's sister, was one of Henry's mistresses



“His army of attendants included one who slept at the end of his bed”

groom of the stool, whose dubious honour was to attend the King when he visited the toilet (or ‘close stool’). So that he might easily attend his master at all hours of the day and night, the groom of the stool’s lodgings lay directly beneath the privy chamber in each palace, linked by a private staircase. Henry selected men of the highest rank for this role, and those who were his personal favourites.

The first to be appointed was Sir William Compton, whom the King had known since infancy. Aside from his official duties, Compton acted as his master’s most confidential messenger.

As such, he was responsible for conveying secret messages from his royal master to both the Queen and Henry’s mistresses. Although he has a reputation as a womaniser, Henry was unusually discreet – prudish, even – about his affairs, so Compton’s task was an important one.

Early in his reign, Henry had a dalliance with Anne Hastings, the married younger sister of the Duke of Buckingham. Compton arranged secret trysts for the King and his mistress in his own home on Thames Street, and rumours soon began to circulate that Compton himself had begun an affair with Hastings. If this was true, Henry bore him no grudge. But when the affair came to light, Anne’s furious husband sent her to a convent.

Over the years to come, the King’s love life would excite a great deal of gossip among his scandalised courtiers.

invested huge sums in projecting his kingly might and magnificence.

Another way in which Henry enhanced his majesty was by creating a clear division between his public and private life at court. He was assisted in this by the architecture of his palaces, at the heart of which there was always a separate suite of private apartments for the King. Only those who enjoyed the greatest favour with Henry would accompany him there.

Henry VII, who was much more reclusive than his son, had retained only a dozen or so servants to attend him in private. But Henry VIII expanded his privy chamber staff to 50, most of whom were close friends and confidantes. He was never alone. As well as the men he appointed for their company, there was a veritable army of attendants to serve and protect him day and night, including one who slept at the end of his bed. This was entirely traditional for a reigning monarch, for reasons of both security and convenience. If Henry had a sudden whim for a flagon of wine in the middle of the night, there was always someone who could fetch it for him.

The most senior – and intimate – of Henry’s privy chamber staff was the

Every time Henry was seen paying more than usual attention to a lady at court, it was rumoured that she was his latest 'inamorata'. The most famous, of course, was Anne Boleyn, a charismatic young lady who first appeared at court in 1522. The Venetian ambassador was at a loss as to why she had so captivated the King.

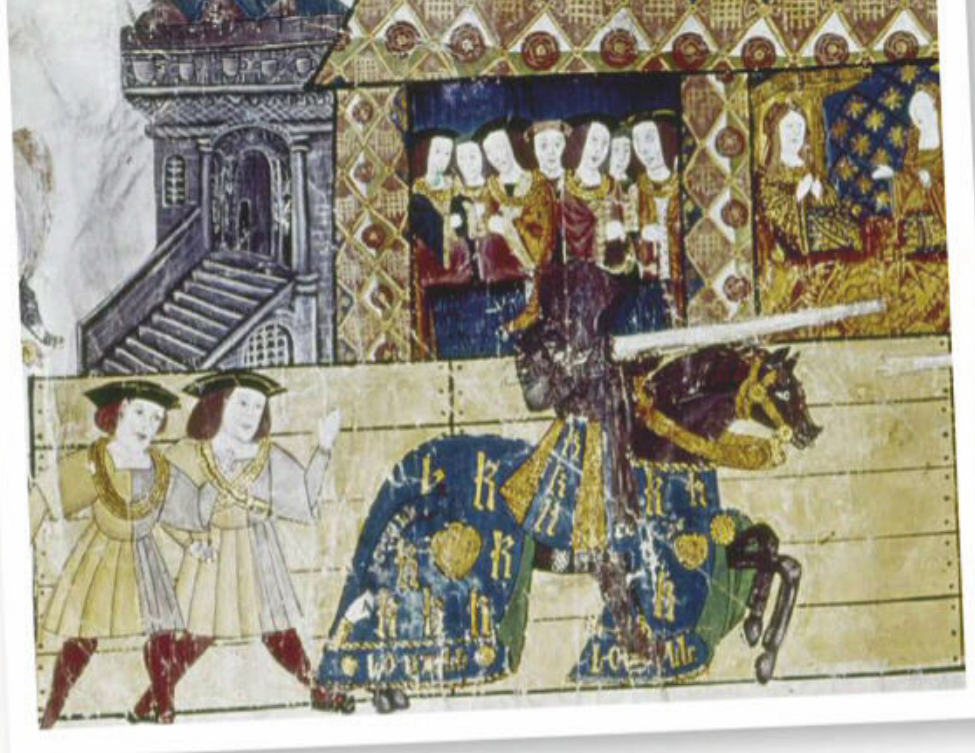
"Madam Anne is not one of the handsomest women in the world," he reported with obvious disapproval, noting her "swarthy complexion" and "bosom not much raised". But Anne had an irresistible charisma that had Henry eating out of her hands, and he overturned the entire religious and political life of England in order to marry her. As a wife, though, Anne soon proved a disappointment and failed to give the king the son and heir he so craved. His faithful servant Thomas Cromwell therefore started a whispering campaign against her and concocted a case of adultery with five men, including her own brother. Anne was executed on 19 May 1536, and the very next day Henry was betrothed to his third wife, Jane Seymour.

BEHIND THE MASQUE

But 1536 was the year it all went wrong for Henry. As well as the scandal of his second wife's downfall and the turmoil that followed, he suffered an accident

whilst jousting that left him with a leg injury from which he would never fully recover. During the years that followed, as more wives came and went, Henry became a (large) shadow of his former self. Plagued by pain from his ulcerated leg and unable to indulge in the sports that he had so loved, he gained a colossal amount of weight. By 1541, his waist measured 54 inches and it was said that "three of the biggest men that could be found could get inside his doublet".

Conscious of the need to betray no sign of frailty to his subjects, Henry put in place a series of procedures in his private realm in order to conceal the extent of his growing weakness. The privy chamber had grown so unwieldy that he ordered a new suite of 'secret lodgings' in his favourite palaces, into



A jousting accident in 1536 set Henry on the path to becoming a famously gluttonous figure

which he could retreat from the prying eyes of the court. Only those of proven trustworthiness and loyalty were permitted to attend him there.

They included his groom of the stool, at that time Sir Thomas Heneage, who had a harder time of it than his predecessors, thanks to his master's increasing bouts of constipation. On one occasion, this became so acute that Heneage was obliged to administer an enema – a pig's bladder with a greased metal tube fixed in it, which

"Henry was conscious of the need to betray no sign of frailty"



ABOVE: Henry meets Anne Boleyn at Cardinal Wolsey's London residence, York Place



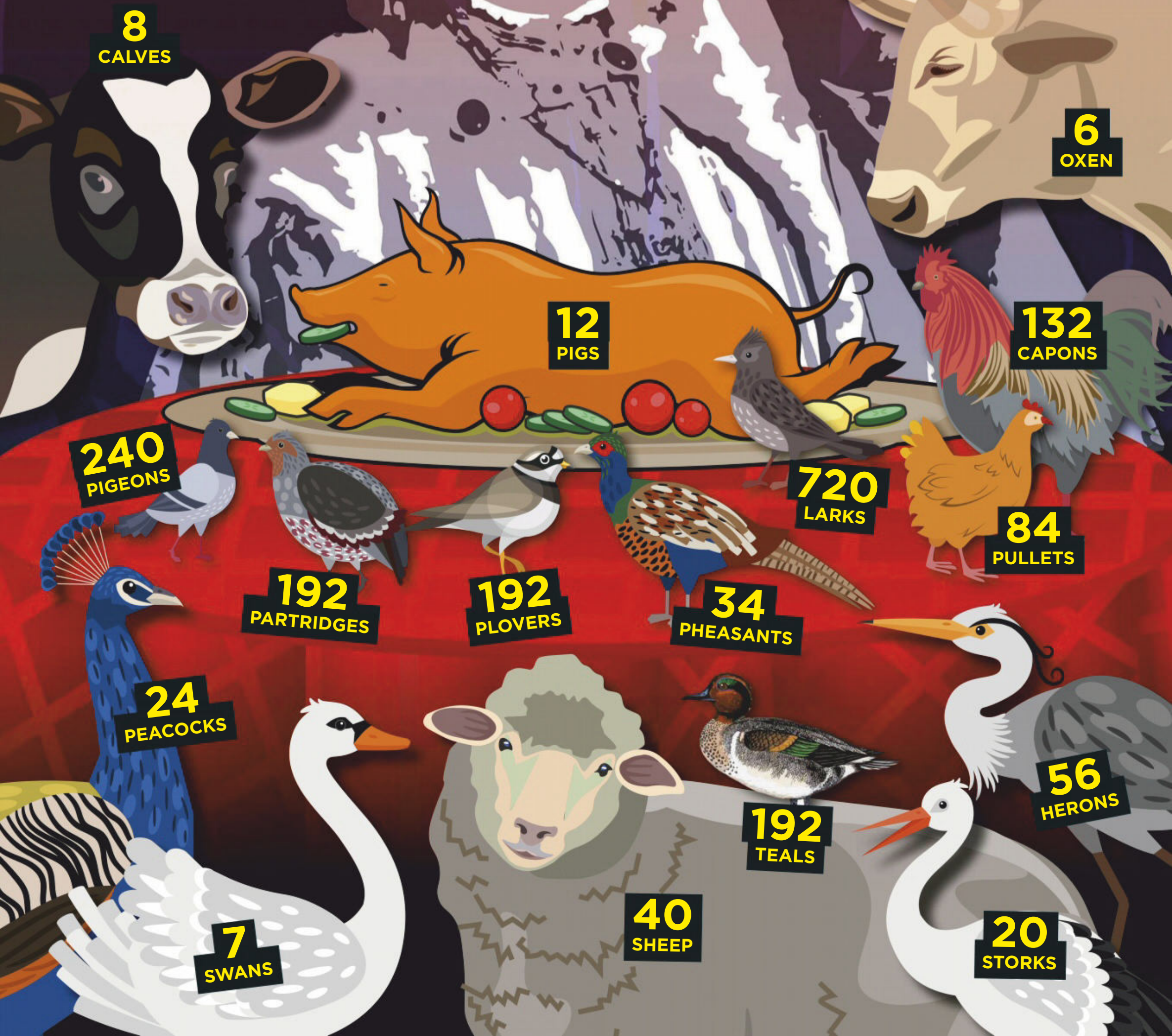
RIGHT: Henry's growing waistline forced his armourers into fashioning ever-larger suits of plate mail

A feast fit for a king

The Tudors ate far more meat than we do today, and the king ate more than most – particularly at Christmas. On one occasion, he and his household ate their way through this gastronomic gamut – including 720 larks, 56 herons and six whole oxen in a single day. Even on an average day, Henry and his courtiers consumed between 4,500 and 5,000 calories – around twice the current intake recommended today for a healthy diet.

SECRET SUPPERS

Though the popular image is of an elephantine Henry chomping on a leg of ham and stuffing porky fingers into pies at huge banquets, the reality was more serene – most of the time he ate in his private apartments, and took great care to wash his hands before eating.





Henry VIII on his deathbed, in an allegorical painting that shows his triumph over the Pope and his passing the kingship to the son he always wanted, Edward VI

was inserted into the King's anus. This was then filled with more than a pint of a weak solution containing salt and infused herbs and kept in place for two hours. It was with some relief that Heneage reported that his royal master had risen at two o'clock in the morning and had had "a very fair siege" [bowel movement]. Perhaps not surprisingly, though, he added that the King had suffered "a little soreness in his body" ever since.

SECRET LODGINGS

This was not the end of Henry's embarrassing health complaints. Even as early as his marriage to Anne Boleyn,

“Once gregarious and open-handed, Henry had become deeply paranoid and suspicious”

he was known to have suffered from occasional impotence. By the time that he married Anne of Cleves in 1540, this had become so pronounced that he was unable to consummate the union – although he placed all of the blame on his “ugly” new wife and her “evil airs”.

By the closing years of Henry's reign, he was living almost entirely in his secret lodgings. On the rare occasions that he appeared in the public court, he could only walk a few paces and was obliged to lean heavily on a staff. He was so overweight that he had to be winched onto his horse, and a form of stair lift and ‘wheeled chair’



TOMMY FUN

Thomas Cromwell, the stony-faced 'thug in a doublet' who became Henry VIII's closest advisor after Cardinal Wolsey's downfall, was a renowned party animal who hosted lavish soirées. He once spent the equivalent of £4,000 on a costume to make the King laugh.

were used to move him around his private apartments. Henry's mental health was precarious, too. This once gregarious, open-handed king had become deeply paranoid and suspicious, and suffered frequent spells of depression after the disintegration of his short-lived marriage to wife number five, Katherine Howard.

Only Henry's closest body servants knew the full extent of his deteriorating health. They saw the suppurating ulcers on his leg, the stench from which could be smelt from three rooms away. When

Henry's ulcerated wound was a sight to behold – and as bad to smell, so contemporary accounts suggest

they undressed their royal master each evening, they had to take care not to aggravate the pus-filled boils that covered other parts of his body.

But this once-glorious King kept up appearances to the last. When Henry fell dangerously ill in December 1546, he retreated in private to Whitehall but made sure that the traditional Christmas celebrations continued as usual at his court. Just a handful of his most trusted attendants and physicians were with him at the end, which came on 28 January 1547. The King who had prided himself on the splendour and magnificence of his court had breathed his last in private. 📍

GET HOOKED

WATCH

BBC TWO Lucy Worsley's *Tudor Christmas* airs on BBC Two this December

Tudor pastimes

"For my pastance, hunt, sing and dance, my heart is set, all goodly sport to my comfort."

Henry VIII penned this verse soon after becoming King in 1509 and it neatly encapsulated his pleasure-loving nature. Free at last from his late father's suffocating control, he spent his days in "continual festival", as his first wife Catherine of Aragon put it. This set the tone for the court as a whole, where there was an array of different pastimes in which to indulge. Sport was the new King's obsession, so all of his major palaces were kitted out with tiltyards, bowling greens, tennis courts and hunting grounds. His courtiers could also practice falconry and archery.

Another pastime favoured by the King and his companions was cockfighting. Henry had a purpose-built arena installed at Whitehall Palace so that he could enjoy this bloody spectator sport whenever he pleased. Bull-and bear-baiting were also popular blood sports in Tudor times, and Henry enjoyed both.

Huge sums could be won and lost on the outcome of these grisly spectacles. The Tudors loved to gamble, and Henry was no exception. As well as betting on spectator sports, he was very fond of playing cards and board games. The privy purse records from January 1530 include a staggering £450 (equivalent to £135,000 today) lost by the King in a single game of dominoes.

More refined pastimes on offer at the Tudor court included masques, plays and music. Such pursuits would help to fill the long hours of waiting around that were the less glamorous – but inevitable – part of a courtier's life.



Cruel and barbaric, cockfighting was a sport for gamblers of all social classes

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WILLIAM TULLETT is a lecturer in history at Angela Ruskin University. His most recent book is *Smell in Eighteenth-Century England: A Social Sense* (OUP, 2019)

Five smells that made Georgian England

They say a picture paints a thousand words, but what about smell? **William Tullett** delivers an on-the-nose guide to the pungent aromas that raised a stink in 18th-century England



ILLUSTRATION: FEMKE DE JONG



If we were to transport ourselves into an English town or city in the 18th century, we would be struck by a panoply of pungent pong and perfumes. But for the Georgian gents and ladies who populated Jane Austen's novels, these smells would hardly be worth mentioning. People got used to the smells around them very quickly. So, whilst the unsanitary streets of Georgian towns would have offended our 21st-century noses, they elicited very little comment from people at the time.

The story of coffee is a good example of this. Today, the aroma of roasted coffee beans is so common we fail to pay much attention to it. But if we took our noses back approximately 350 years, when coffee was first becoming popular in London, we would find a very different story. Late 17th-century Londoners were waking up and smelling the coffee – and some of them did not like it. Pamphleteers complained that the scent of coffee was like urine, soot, old shoes and even the sulphurous stench of hell. At least one gentleman unlucky enough to live next to a coffee house in London attempted to take the owners to court for bothering him with odours and smoke caused by coffee roasting. Yet by the 1720s, when people had got used to the scent of coffee, the complaints died away. A smell once described as a stench was now deemed fragrant by the noses of Englishmen and women.

Smells are around us every day and – with a few exceptions – most human beings through history have possessed noses. So, smells can tell us a great deal about how past people perceived the world around them. When historians delve into the archive and start sniffing, there are five scents that waft from the annals of the 18th century with particular pungency: rose, fish, ammonia, tobacco and paint. This rich bouquet can tell us a lot about how Georgians saw (and smelled) their world, as we explore over the following pages.



Come up smelling like roses

In the Tudor and Stuart period, perfumes were still being sold by druggists and apothecaries. The word 'perfume' came from a Latin word that meant 'to scent by smoking'. The first perfumes were in balls that, when burnt, released a smell into the room around you, and in the 16th and 17th centuries they had been purported to protect against plague by purifying the air and warding off bad odours. But in the 18th century, commercial perfumers emerged and began to ply their wares in shops selling cosmetics, hair-powder, and scented waters.

By the second half of the 18th century, one of the most popular of these scents was 'attar' or 'otto' of rose. This was an essential oil produced by distillation, a technique devised by Arabic chemists in the 12th century. Roses and water were heated in a large copper still, and the essential oil released by the process was siphoned off and made into a perfume.

Otto of roses was so fashionable that worries emerged about counterfeit products, even into the 19th century. A guide for servants from 1831 advised readers how to check for fake perfumes: "Drop a very little otto on a clean piece of writing paper and hold it to the fire. If the article be genuine, it will evaporate without leaving a mark on the paper; if otherwise, a grease-spot will detect the imposition."

Why was otto of roses so popular in the late 18th century? The same period saw the rise of Britain's empire in India, and a taste developed for exotic luxury products from Britain's new territories. Perfumers capitalised on the demand by advertising 'The True Persian' or 'True Indian' otto of roses. It also replaced earlier perfumes that were going out of fashion. Civet, a perfume extracted from a gland near the anus of the civet cat, was popular in the 17th century, but Georgians increasingly felt that wearing a perfume taken from a cat's bum was not especially genteel.

Something fishy

In Georgian England, people bought their food in marketplaces, and these were rather different from today's supermarkets. Food had no protective packaging, no sell-by or use-by dates, and very little quality control. The onus was on the customer to ensure their purchases were fresh. Buying food that had gone off might make you ill, but it also made you look foolish in front of dinner guests who might think you were being cheap. Luckily, lots of household manuals were printed in the 18th century and these told consumers what to look (and smell) for when they went to market.

When buying meat and fish a curious nose was especially valuable. Lobsters, prawns, and shrimps had to be sniffed; if they had a 'slimy' smell, then they were to be avoided. When buying pheasants, standard practice was to pick them up and sniff around the throat to determine their freshness and to make sure they had no 'tainted' smell. Butter also required testing. Buyers were advised to avoid depending

on the piece of butter offered by the tradesman (as was common practice), since they would give you the tastiest bit to try. Instead, customers should bring their own knife, put it straight in the middle of the butter, and then give it a sniff to determine its freshness.

Of course, sniffing people's produce did not go down well with all merchants. Billingsgate women, who sold fish in London's main seafood market, were notorious for being loud, swears, and angry. Several satirical prints from the period depicted Billingsgate women insulting customers after they asked to smell the fish before making a purchase. For some fisherwomen, asking to smell their fish was insulting. It suggested that the customer did not trust them to sell fresh fish and that something smelt fishy in more ways than one.





TOBACCO Smoke is out, but spit is fine

Even in Georgian England, the smell of tobacco smoke had already begun to court controversy. Whereas in the 17th century, men gathered around newspapers and puffed on their pipes in coffee houses, the 18th century saw smokers chased from many venues.

The Georgians believed that women could not tolerate tobacco smoke. Articles in magazines told stories about wives who had threatened to leave their husbands if they did not give up their pipes. The Georgian period also saw an explosion of social life: new theatres, ballrooms,

and pleasure gardens popped up in towns and cities where men and women went to mingle, socialise, and find somebody to marry. In these venues puffing a pipe was deemed impolite.

Instead, many fashionable Georgians turned to taking snuff: finely ground tobacco that was snorted up the nose. Shoving tobacco up your nostrils presented its own problems: it led to sneezing, grunting and spitting. But, unlike smoking, it did not invade others' personal space. It allowed tobacco to be consumed without engulfing those around you in a pungent haze.

Snuff may have been fashionable, but many found it disgusting. Attendees at church complained about snuff-takers spitting, hawking, and grunting during sermons. The respectful silence was disturbed by 'the music of the nose'. Some snuff takers recognised their habit was unattractive. The Reverend William Jones described his battle to quit snuff in his diary, and on 18 July 1808 he finally wrote, "I trust I have done with snuff - and I cannot sufficiently rejoice! I now carry a decent handkerchief instead of a portable dunghill, which almost every snuff taker may be said to do!"



The faintest notion

The smell of ammonia is particularly pungent. It's a solution of nitrogen and hydrogen that can be produced by fermenting stale urine, but it's also found as naturally appearing crystals. The former was frequently used in dyeing clothing. But the crystals, known as sal ammoniac, were also used as a medicine.

The pungent smell of ammonia sets off our trigeminal nerve, which is linked to emotions and facial expressions: it's the thing that causes your eyes to water and the sensation of heat when you eat strong mustard. The 18th century was when physicians became particularly interested in the nerves: some medical writers blamed almost every illness on them. They believed that sniffing ammonia woke up the body and restored it to its senses.

Having sensitive nerves became a mark of superior social status. The more sensitive you were, the more fashionable you appeared. Women were held to be particularly prone to nervousness. In novels and dramas, Georgian heroines were portrayed swooning, fainting, and collapsing as their emotions overcame them. To combat this, men and women

carried smelling bottles full of ammonia or 'smelling salts'. These were thin bottles – often with screw tops or stoppers – that could be held in the hand or placed in pockets. Images portrayed theatre audiences in which female spectators, unable to deal with an on-stage surprise, had to reach for the smelling bottle to revive themselves. One performance by the actress Sarah Siddons in Dublin was said to be so emotional that the music was drowned out by “the sobs and sighs of the groaning audience and the noise of the corks drawn from smelling-bottles”.

The powers of smelling salts even extended to resurrection. In the late 18th century new so-called 'humane' societies began to spring up, formed by physicians with the aim of finding ways to resuscitate the 'apparently drowned or asphyxiated'. Putting smelling salts to the nose of the drowned person could jolt their nerves back into action. This was just one of several techniques explored; another included pumping a tobacco smoke enema up people's posteriors to revive them – a rather rude awakening.



The colour of tragic

The smell of paint might seem an odd inclusion, but it is one of the few smells regularly described in Georgian diaries. Why does it appear so often? Well, one reason was that household redecoration was not an everyday occurrence, so the smell of paint was an unusual one. It was also hard to ignore. Georgian paints contained ingredients such as linseed oil and turpentine, which gave them a particularly strong smell.


Those who made paint got used to its smell, but in the early 18th century it was believed to be dangerous to health. It was the Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini who suggested in his *Treatise of the Diseases of Tradesmen* (which was translated into English in 1705) that the strong smelling ingredients used to make paint meant that those tradesmen who produced it often lost their sense of smell.

Ramazzini wrote about the effects of smells on many different types of artisan. In fact, he was one of the first people to suggest a history of smell. Smells were so important to medicine, religion, and science, Ramazzini argued, that somebody ought to write a “natural and physical history of odours”. But Ramazzini himself felt ill-equipped to do so because he felt it would be too difficult, complicated, and intricate.

Luckily, just over 300 years later, historians are finally using their noses and sniffing out the stories hinted at by Ramazzini.

GET HOOKED

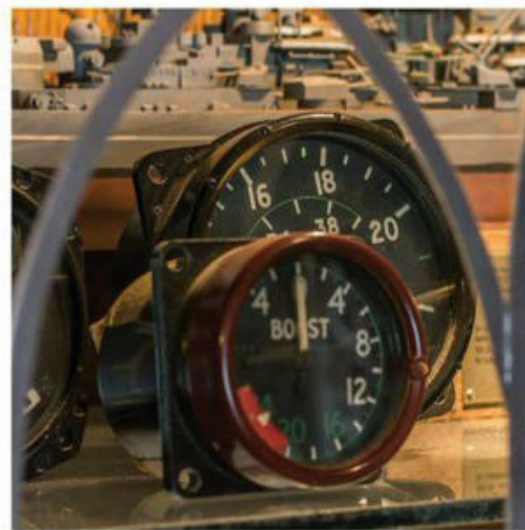
LISTEN

 William Tullett discusses the history of perfume on an episode of *The Forum* on the BBC World Service. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csv0rn





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Ada Blackjack STRANDED IN THE ARCTIC

Ellie Cawthorne
tells the tale of the
'female Robinson
Crusoe', who
escaped death's
frozen grasp
when all around
her perished

Blackjack's story of
survival against the odds
became a contemporary
marvel - though she
barely benefitted
from its telling

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On 19 August 1923, a freezing evening drew in on Wrangel Island, 100 miles north of the coast of Siberia. As a thick blanket of fog rolled over the bleak Arctic landscape, Ada Blackjack sat swaddled in a thick reindeer parka, preparing her meagre evening meal.

Blackjack had arrived on the island two years earlier as the seamstress attached to a party of Arctic explorers. But the ill-fated expedition had been plagued by illness and bad weather, and she was now the only one of the five members left alive.

As she settled down to make her food that evening, Ada heard an unfamiliar noise. Deciding it must have been “a duck or something”, she retired to her tent and tried to sleep. At 6am the next morning, she heard the sound again, but this time, “it sounded more like a boat whistle”. Grabbing her binoculars, Blackjack ran outside. Sure enough, in the distance she spotted a schooner, its crewmen wandering about on the shore. Finally, Blackjack’s salvation had arrived – her two-year ordeal was over.

ACT OF DESPERATION

Under 5ft tall with no expedition experience, little desire for adventure and a crippling fear of polar bears, Ada Blackjack was an unlikely candidate for Arctic exploration. Born in 1898, she had been raised by Methodist missionaries in the tough Alaskan town of Nome. While many Iñupiat people were well-versed in Arctic survival, these skills were never deemed necessary in Ada’s missionary upbringing – instead, she was taught to clean, cook and sew.

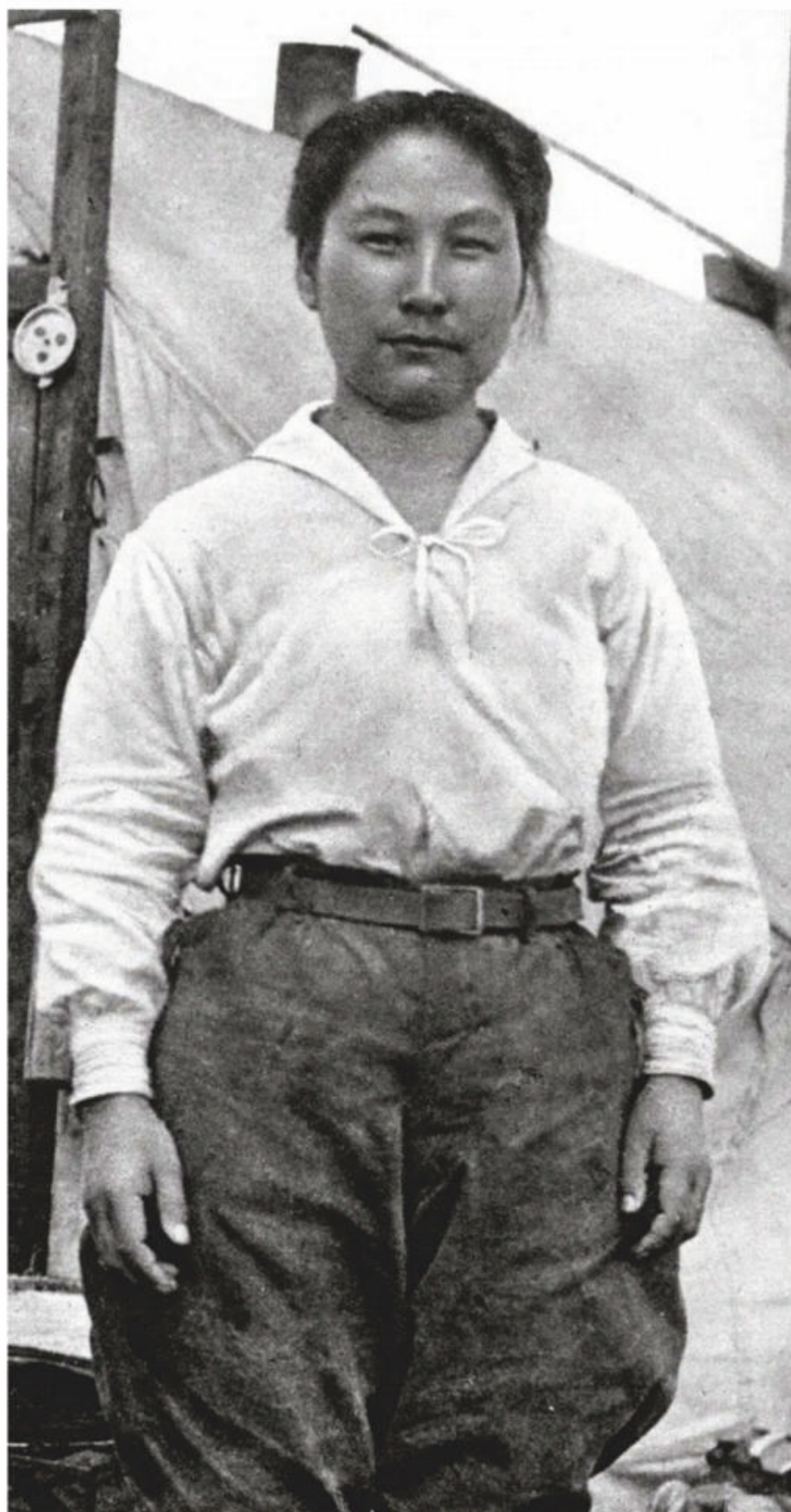
But by 1921, 23-year-old Blackjack was a divorced and destitute single mother. After her abusive husband had abandoned her, she had desperately struggled to support her young son, Bennett, who was suffering from tuberculosis. But supporting him single-handedly had become impossible, and Blackjack was forced to place him in an orphanage.

Blackjack was in desperate need of money in order to be reunited with her son when, in September 1921, a ship called the *Victoria* pulled into Nome. Hailing from Seattle, it carried four young men tasked with a daunting mission. At the behest of celebrated Canadian explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson, they were heading to the remote Wrangel Island, 100 miles north of Siberia. The team – made up of Lorne Knight, Frederick Maurer, Milton Galle and Allan Crawford – planned to

live on the uninhabited land for two years in order to claim the territory for the British government.

In Nome, they intended to recruit several Iñupiat people to assist with camp duties, and Blackjack – well known as a skilled seamstress – was a perfect candidate. Initially she was reluctant, afraid of being away from home for so long and aware of her lack of experience. This ominous feeling was reinforced

“Her ominous feelings were reinforced when other Iñupiat families backed out”

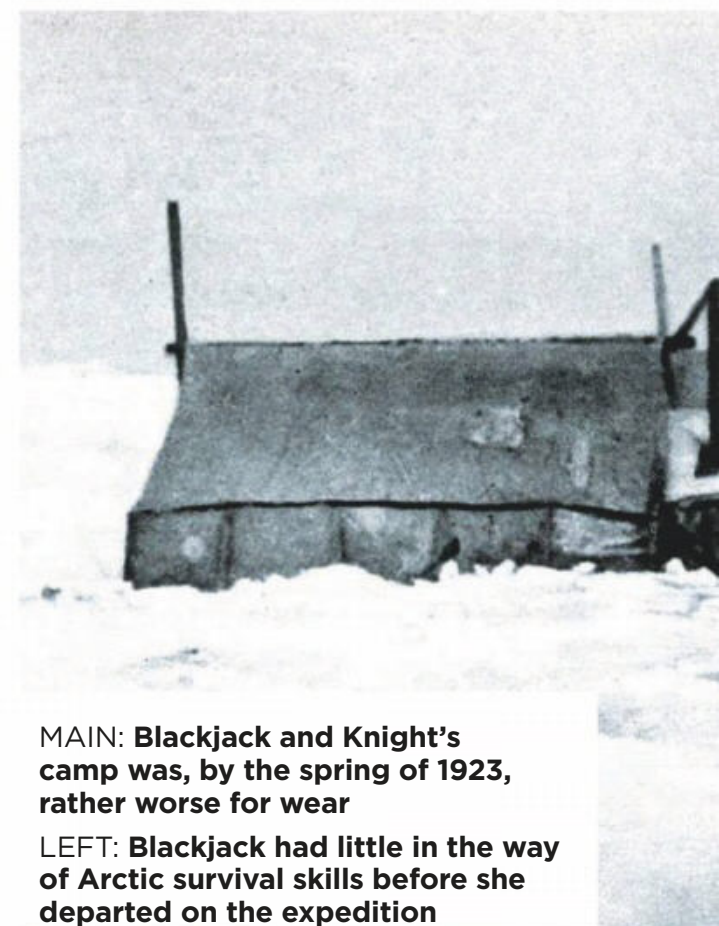


when the other Iñupiat families that had been recruited backed out at the last moment. But Blackjack was desperate. The monthly salary of \$50 was enough to bring Bennett home. It was an opportunity she could not afford to turn down.

On the afternoon of 9 September 1921, Blackjack joined the team as they pulled out of Nome aboard a different vessel, the *Silver Wave*. Within a week, Wrangel Island could be spotted on the horizon. On first impressions, it was far from the barren, ice-locked wasteland they had been warned of: the rocky outcrop was covered in lichen and mosses, the climate relatively temperate. Crawford’s men wasted no time hoisting a British flag and burying a proclamation staking their claim “for His Majesty George, King of Great Britain”.

The first few months were tinged with optimism. Once they had set up camp they quickly fell into a routine, spending their days mapping the island or collecting geological and biological specimens, the long evenings whiled away gambling or reading the same few books cover to cover.

Assured by Stefansson that a ship would be arriving with more supplies in the summer, the team made no attempt to ration their six months’ worth of provisions, which they topped up with the island’s seemingly plentiful wild game – especially polar bears, which scared Blackjack half to death when they roamed close to camp. She cooked up whatever the men were able to catch, from seagull to fox and owl. Polar bear steaks fried in seal blubber proved especially popular.



MAIN: Blackjack and Knight’s camp was, by the spring of 1923, rather worse for wear

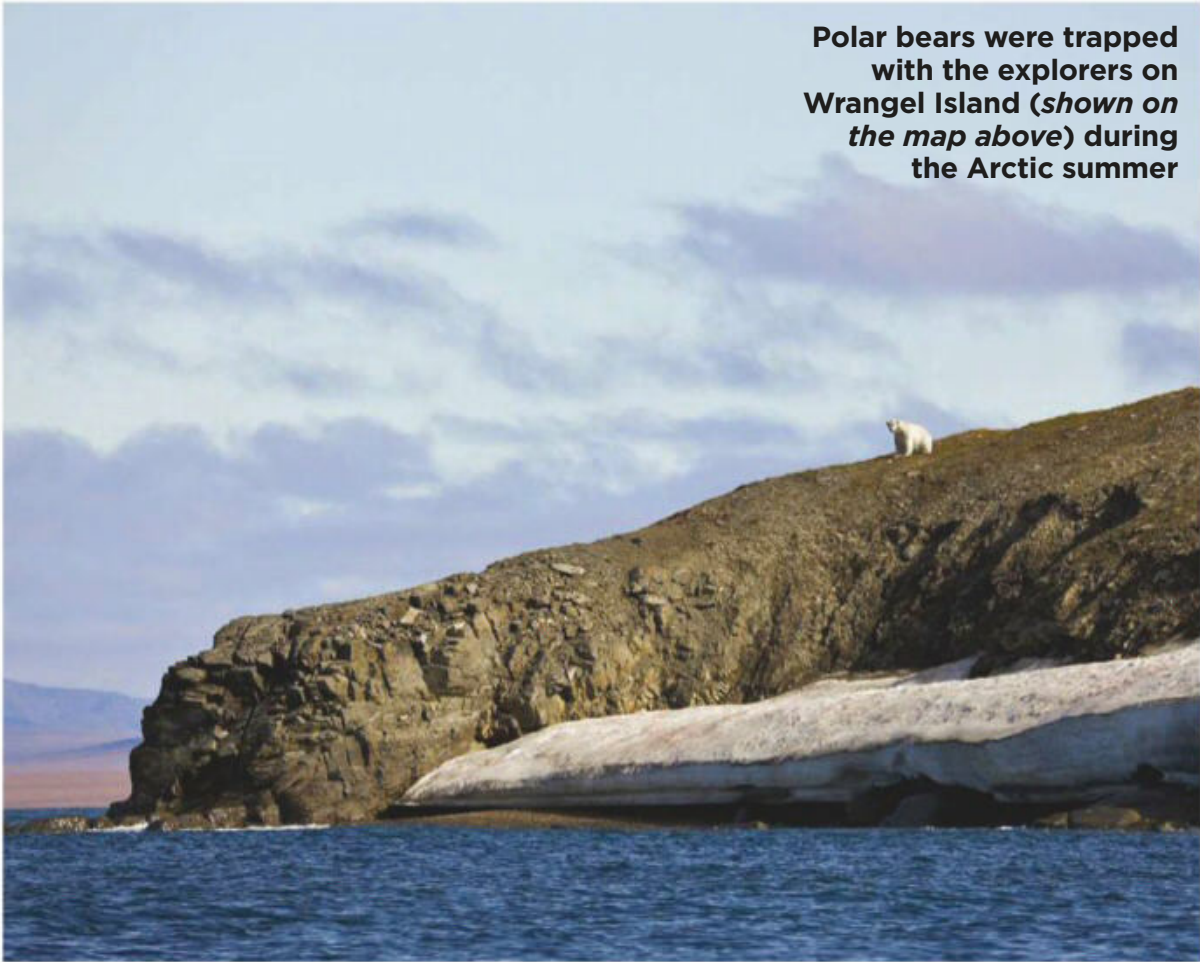
LEFT: Blackjack had little in the way of Arctic survival skills before she departed on the expedition

Slowly, though, the mood in camp began to shift. Hunting opportunities began to slip away as a disorientating Arctic winter brought 61 days of darkness. The desperately homesick Blackjack had quickly come to regret her decision and irritated the men with her changeable moods and anguished outbursts. Knight showed little sympathy, complaining in his diary: “it is NOT funny for the four of us to have a foolish female howling and refusing to work and eating all of our good grub.”

Whatever their hardships, Ada and the team knew that if they could just



Polar bears were trapped with the explorers on Wrangel Island (shown on the map above) during the Arctic summer



THE OTHER EXPEDITION MEMBERS



ALLAN CRAWFORD

At just 20 years old, Allan Crawford was an inexperienced expedition leader. He was chosen because he was Canadian, which made him a British citizen – necessary to stake a British claim for Wrangel Island. Stefansson wrote to his young captain

ahead of the mission: “Although I have confidence in you, you are in command through the accident of being British ... the wiser you are, the more you will follow the advice of your experienced men.”

FREDERICK MAURER

American Fred Maurer was no novice in the frozen north. Seven years earlier, the 28-year-old had even spent time on Wrangel Island, on Stefansson’s doomed Karluk expedition. That mission had almost cost him his life – 11 had died on that expedition. He married his sweetheart Delphine before setting off, with Stefansson as his best man.



MILTON GALLE

“My experience has been that generally the younger the man the more readily he adapts himself to northern conditions,” Stefansson wrote to a friend when planning the Wrangel Island mission. His youngest recruit was 19-year-old Texan

Milton Galle. In fact, it was in the Arctic that Galle grew his first beard. He was “simply overjoyed” to be chosen for the mission and was keen to record everything on his beloved typewriter.

LORNE KNIGHT

Loud, raucous and straight talking, Seattle native Lorne Knight had a long-standing appetite for adventure. He had been on previous Arctic expeditions with Stefansson and had even suffered from scurvy – recovering by gorging on fresh caribou tongue. Knight was close to his family, and his father wrote how proud they were that “Lorne has become a real explorer”. Blackjack found him to be a frightening figure and was intimidated by his broad frame, unpredictable temper and wild facial hair.



tough it out until summer, Stefansson's ship would be arriving with new team members and supplies, as well as treasured letters from home. "I shall not shave or dress up until next year, when Mr Stefansson and several other white men will come," the youthful Galle declared in his journal. The team tracked the progress of the ice floes with the changing seasons, eagerly awaiting the arrival. Little did they know that their relief vessel had come unstuck.

After a delayed departure due to a lack of funding, the resupply vessel – *Teddy Bear* – had been caught in some of the worst ice in 25 years. On 25 September 1922, its captain messaged Stefansson that they had been forced to turn back: "*Teddy Bear* unsuccessful. Encountered Arctic pack, propeller damaged. All navigators here predicted failure due to unusual ice condition." For his part, Stefansson was not overly concerned, reflecting: "We had no reason to think that the skill of the men already there was inadequate to meet the situation."

Back on Wrangel Island, as summer turned to autumn, the team slowly

realised that no one was coming to relieve them. Their rations were almost exhausted, the polar bears that had once been so plentiful appeared to have all but vanished, and hunting missions were becoming ever more fruitless. It soon became clear that despite Blackjack's best efforts at serving up even the most inedible cuts of meat, there was simply not enough food to keep all five of them alive. Knight, meanwhile, had begun to feel weak and lethargic. His joints were aching and gums sore. Although he tried to keep these grisly symptoms from his teammates, he recognised them well from his previous Arctic expeditions. It was the early stages of scurvy.

"Blackjack realised she would have to bring in fresh meat to keep Knight alive"

In January 1923, with the looming spectre of starvation hanging over camp, Crawford made a difficult decision. Along with Galle and Maurer, he would embark on an ambitious trek back across the now-frozen sea to fetch help, leaving Blackjack at camp with the rapidly deteriorating Knight. As the three men set off with a tranche of supplies and the five remaining dogs, the dangers involved were not lost on them.

"Whether I reach my goal or not remains to be seen," Maurer wrote in a final letter to his wife. "If the fates favour me, I'll have the pleasure of telling you all about it, if against me, then someone else, no doubt, will tell you all." Blackjack was especially sad to bid farewell to Galle, who had shown her kindness and enjoyed listening to her folktales.

Just a couple of days after the three figures had disappeared over the horizon, the weather turned. A vicious gale struck up, "blowing and drifting as hard as I have ever seen it," Knight noted downheartedly in his diary. Crawford, Galle and Maurer were never seen again.

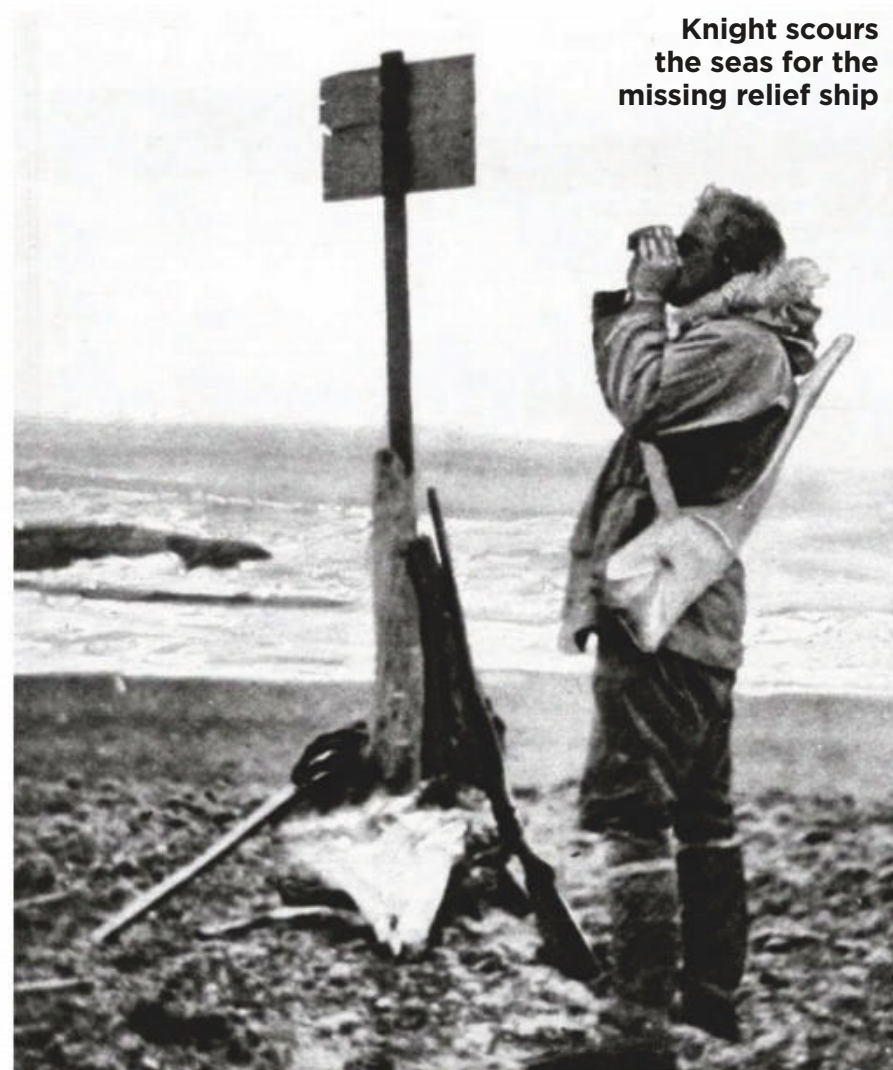
NURSE AND HUNTER

At camp, Knight deteriorated quickly. He was soon confined to bed, suffering from aggressive nosebleeds and covered with mottled bruises, teeth falling from his softened gums. Although she had never used a gun, Blackjack realised that she would have to bring in fresh meat if she was going to keep Knight alive. Despite

Crawford carves ice into blocks, which will be used to build a snow hut



Knight scours the seas for the missing relief ship





ONE COOL CAT

As well as its five human members, the expedition also had a feline explorer in its number – a cat called Victoria. Named after the ship that had carried the team from Seattle, Vic snuggled in the team's sleeping bags at night and lived off scraps and leftovers. She also survived the two years on Wrangel Island.

ABOVE: Blackjack took on all aspects of camp management – such as cooking, sewing and (as seen here) preparing boot soles

MAIN: Blackjack was never fond of facing a polar bear, and took to sleeping with a rifle in case one ventured too close



Blackjack joined the expedition so she could earn enough money to reunite with her son

her diminutive frame, she taught herself to shoot with his huge, heavy rifle, and built a platform from which she could spot the dreaded polar bears. She was so afraid of the beasts that she began sleeping with the rifle above her bed in case any roamed too close to camp.

Blackjack tended to Knight as best she could. But he was far from a grateful patient, constantly scolding, and even flinging books at her. As Blackjack saw her teammate slipping away, she

began to despair at the thought of being left alone on the island. "If anything happen to me and my death is known ... I wish if you please take everything to Bennett that is belong to me," she wrote in her diary. "I don't know how much I would be glad to get home to folks." On 23 June, her fears were finally confirmed when she awoke to find Knight cold and unmoving.

LAST STAND

Although the prospect of life all alone in such a vast, silent landscape was overwhelming, Blackjack ploughed on with the gruelling daily slog of staying alive. She counted off each day on a calendar crafted from Galle's typewriter paper, but countless more still stretched out ahead. Yet even as hope was fading, Blackjack was determined to make it back to her son. She filled her journal with worries about Bennett's future, and sewed him a pair of slippers.

The skills Ada had taught herself were now essential to staying alive. After typing a note each morning detailing her whereabouts in case rescuers appeared, she set traps for foxes and learnt to shoot birds and seals. It was far from easy, and every lost opportunity meant an ever more uncertain fate. When the skin boat Ada had carefully crafted blew away in the night, she wept with frustration. But she refused to be defeated, finding solace in her Christian faith – as she noted in her diary on 23 July: "I thank God for living."

It was not until 20 August 1923 – almost two years after she had landed on Wrangel Island – that Ada's ordeal finally came to an end. As the crew of the schooner *Donaldson* approached her camp, Blackjack was overwhelmed with emotion, and broke down sobbing. When the rescuers asked her where her teammates were, she could only reply: "There is nobody here but me. I am all alone." ❶

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

On her return to Alaska, Blackjack was plunged into the middle of a media storm. The press clamoured to hear how the "female Robinson Crusoe" had survived an ordeal so ghastly it had claimed the lives of the other heroic explorers, the pressure intensifying when accusations were made that she had not done enough to save Knight. All this invasive media attention did not sit easily with the private Blackjack, who simply wanted to be reunited with her son.

With her salary from the voyage, Blackjack was finally able to take Bennett to Seattle for treatment. But while she may have escaped Wrangel Island, her fight for survival was not over. Though Stefansson and others profited from writing sensationalist books about her ordeal, Blackjack continued to be plagued by poverty and hardship throughout her life. She later had a second son, Billy, but money problems forced her to place him and Bennett in a home for nine years. She later moved back to Alaska to work as a reindeer herder and lived until the age of 85.

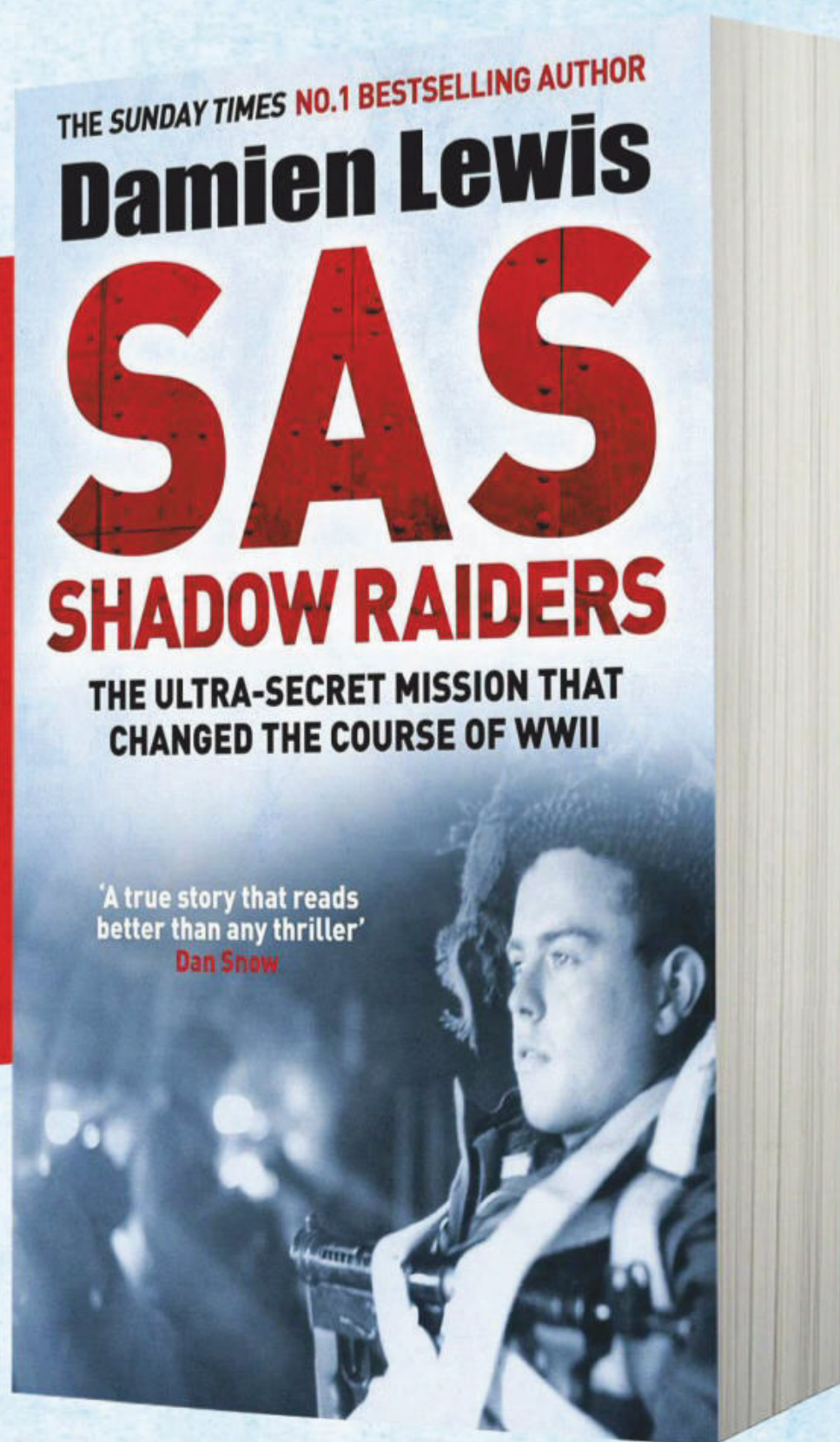
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ENGLAND THRO

Emma Slattery Williams

explores the work of Tony Ray-Jones: a pioneer of British post-war photography whose images distilled the lighthearted, social side of English life in the late 1960s

Between 1966 and 1969, photographer Tony Ray-Jones – then in his mid-twenties – travelled across England in a campervan, capturing on camera what he described as the essence of “the English way of life ... before it becomes more Americanised”.

His fascination with ‘Englishness’ – from manners and traditions, to eccentricities and comedy – saw Ray-Jones travel the length and breadth of the country, capturing amusing and often poignant images of people at work and at play, enjoying their leisure time in a uniquely English way, or focussed on their daily struggle to survive.

The resulting images encompass a wealth of English scenes – from disorganised family days at the beach, to the airs and graces of Glyndebourn: snapshots of history that are forever English. Here are some of *BBC History Revealed*’s favourites, taken from a new Bristol exhibition on Tony Ray-Jones.



A SELF-PORTRAIT OF TONY RAY-JONES, 1960s

▲ Tony Ray-Jones said of his photography: “I have tried to show the sadness and humour in a gentle madness that prevails in people.”

RAMSGATE, 1968

► Many of Ray-Jones’ images show families across England enjoying the seaside and all its delights



UGH A LENS



© TONY RAY-JONES/NATIONAL SCIENCE & MEDIA MUSEUM/SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY X2



DURHAM, 1969
◀ Revellers enjoy the annual Miners' Gala – a labour festival still held today that celebrates Durham's mining heritage

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MABLETHORPE, 1967

▲ A familiar and often chaotic family scene at the beach



WINDSOR HORSE SHOW, 1967

▲ This annual event draws in horse lovers from across the world to watch dressage and show jumping

BRIGHTON, 1966

▼ The English seaside has long been a place of enjoyment for all ages, whatever the weather



**BRIGHTON BEACH,
1967**

► An elderly man rolls
up his trousers and
enjoys a spot of
paddling in the sea



**GLYNDEBOURNE,
1967**

▼ Music fans picnic
in style at the annual
opera festival





EPSOM DERBY DAY, 1968
 ◀ Horse-racing fans enjoy the summer tradition of eating ice creams – from the relative comfort of their car

NOTTING HILL GATE, 1967
 ▼ Although best known for capturing the lighter side of English life, Ray-Jones often recorded the daily struggle to survive



THE SEASIDE, 1966
 ▼ A couple catches some rays while listening to music on a portable record player, singles lined up on the blanket beside them



GET HOOKED

EXHIBITION

The English Seen by Tony Ray-Jones will run at the Martin Parr Foundation in Bristol until 21 December 2019. Admission is free. www.martinparrfoundation.org

READ

An accompanying book has been published by RRB Photobooks/Martin Parr Foundation, titled *Tony Ray-Jones*

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Image by Angela Ithyle



THE TRUE STORY OF THE NATIVITY



Can we take the story of Christmas as gospel?
Spencer Mizen thumbs through the conflicting
accounts of Christ's birth to separate fact from fable



The nativity is
probably the most
famous story
in Christianity

ALAMY X1, GETTY IMAGES X1

Slade and Cliff Richard on the airwaves, shopping centres full to bursting, glittering trees and sprigs of mistletoe, teachers frantically putting the finishing touches to school nativity plays up and down the land – the Christmas season is definitely one that is steeped in tradition.

In excess of two billion people consider the festive season to be the most important holiday of the year. In fact, Christmas has become such a heavyweight in the global calendar that it's now celebrated by more people than any other religious event on the planet.

But what about the 2,000-year-old tale that lies at the heart of these celebrations? Is it cold-hard historical fact, a theological flight of fancy, or something in between? Virtually everyone knows the nativity story – Joseph and Mary's search for room in the inn, the shepherds tending their flocks, the three wise men arriving in the stable bearing glittering gifts. But these episodes were recorded by shadowy scribes, with little corroborating evidence, a very long time ago. The story of Jesus's birth may be among the most celebrated in all of literature, but is it possible to root it in history?

This is a question that scholars have pondered for centuries, and most have

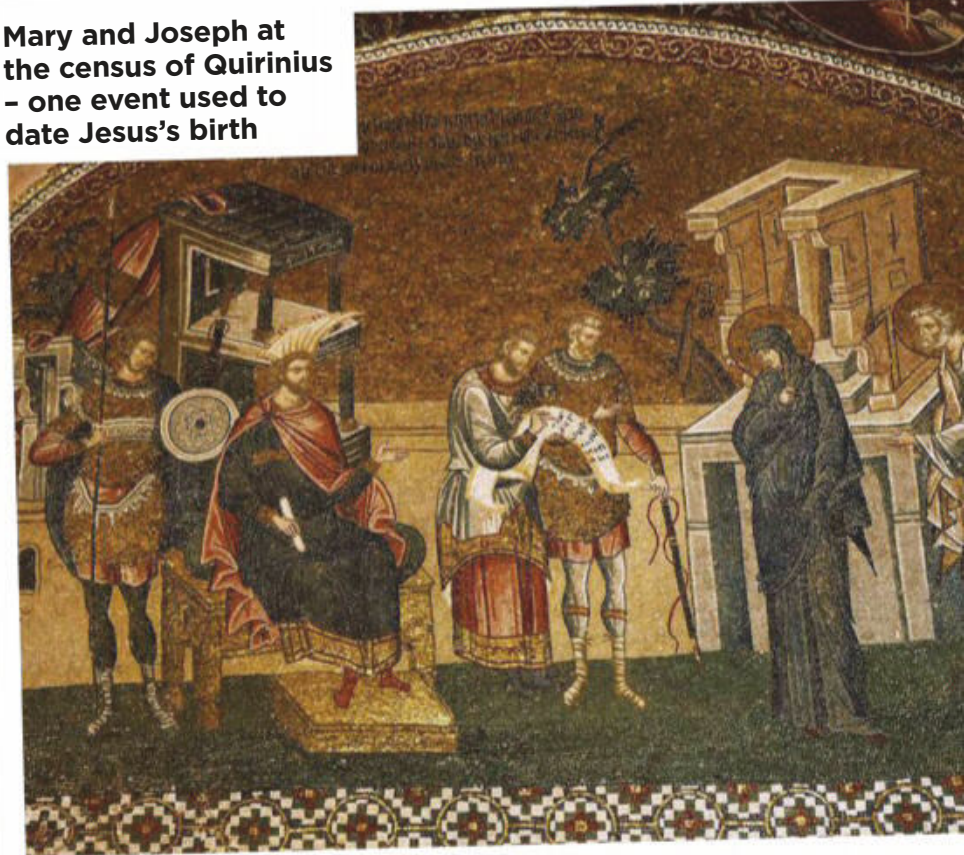
tried to find the answer in the pages of the most important books in the entire Christian canon: the gospels.

GOSPEL TRUTHS

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John may be the authors on whose writings much of our knowledge of Jesus's life and teaching are based, but for historians investigating the nativity story, they throw up two major problems. The first is that two of the books – Mark and John – fail to mention Jesus's birth at all; the second is that the two that do – Matthew and Luke – disagree on many of the details.

Matthew and Luke both tell us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and that his mother, Mary, was a virgin when she gave birth. But these are the only

Mary and Joseph at the census of Quirinius – one event used to date Jesus's birth



“This story was recorded by shadowy scribes, with little corroborating evidence, a long time ago”

episodes of the nativity story in which the two accounts converge.

We've got Matthew to thank for the appearance of an angel to Joseph in a dream, the three wise men following the star from the east, and Herod the Great's infamous massacre of the innocents. Luke mentions none of these. Instead, it's from Luke that we learn that “an angel of the Lord” appeared before some shepherds “keeping watch over their flock by night”, that Mary and Joseph were forced to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in a Roman census, and that Jesus was laid in a manger.

For some academics, the discrepancies between Luke and Matthew's accounts cast further doubt on the nativity's historical credibility, but not everyone agrees. “If the evangelists were going to make up a story about the origins of Jesus, and keep their story straight, you would expect their stories *not* to differ in detail,” argues Ben Witherington, a New Testament scholar at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky. “The fact that they do, suggests we are dealing with two independent witnesses talking about the same events, with the same core substance affirmed by both.”

There's another fact to take into account here, and that's that Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels around 70 years after Jesus's birth. Given that eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus's life were, by then, rapidly dying out – and that many early Christian communities were isolated from one another, scattered by political upheaval – you could argue that it would be quite an achievement if Matthew and Luke's accounts *did* agree.

The lack of consensus between Matthew and Luke certainly didn't



Mark and John write their gospels – which fail to mention Jesus's birth at all – in this 12th-century mural



**DID
YOU KNOW?**

In a 2017 survey, almost
one in 20 Britons
thought Jesus was
born at Easter.



Cherubs watch over
the newborn Jesus in
Carlo Maratti's 1650s oil
on canvas 'Holy Night'

The massacre of the innocents only appears in Matthew's gospel



trouble Dionysius ‘the Humble’. In what would become the sixth century AD, this prominent Roman monk invented the Anno Domini era, declaring with cast-iron certainty that Jesus was born in AD 1. It was a bold assertion and it stuck, creating the dating system that we use to this very day. But were Dionysius’s calculations any more than pure guesswork? Can he really have divined the precise year of Jesus’s birth?

From a distance of two millennia, it’s a fiendishly difficult riddle to solve. But three incidents in the gospel writers’ accounts of the nativity – the census, the massacre of the innocents, and the star of Bethlehem – at least offer some potential clues.

The Roman census – requiring all Jews to return to their ancestral home to be counted – is one of the most famous incidents in Luke’s version of the nativity story. Some historians have cast doubt on the tale, opining that it simply wasn’t Roman practice to uproot families in such a way. However, we know from other historical sources that the Roman governor of Syria, Quirinius, called a census of Judea – and that he did so in



“If three magi did follow a star two millennia ago, where exactly were they heading?”

AD 6. Could, then, Jesus have been born in this very year?

It’s possible. But there’s a problem, presented by one of the most notorious episodes in Matthew’s version of the nativity: the massacre of the innocents. This sees Herod the Great (the Roman-appointed King of Judea), perturbed by the news that the “King of the Jews” had just been born in Bethlehem, ordering that all males in that town below the age of two be put to death.

Grim fact? Elaborate fiction? Again, opinion is divided. Some claim that if

Herod had indeed ordered the killings, then the first-century historian Josephus – a vehement critic of the Judean king – would have been quick to condemn him. Witherington, however, sees little reason to doubt Matthew. “So ruthless and paranoid was Herod that he killed his very own children, fearing they planned to usurp his throne. Surely, then, he was more than capable of murdering unknown babies.

“But given that Bethlehem probably had fewer than 1,000 residents, the massacre of the innocents would have been a minor detail in history, only involving a few small children – perhaps no more than six or so.”

Minor detail or not, the slaughter of the innocents can’t have happened in AD 6 – the year of Quirinius’s census – for the simple reason that Herod the Great died in 4 BC, a full ten years earlier. So instead of clearing up the confusion over Jesus’s year of birth, these two incidents merely muddy the waters.

STAR OF WONDER

But what about the star of Bethlehem? Can that shine any light on the

conundrum? The image of the three kings – or magi – following the star to the stable is arguably the most celebrated of the entire nativity story.

For centuries, academics have attempted to peg this star to an astronomical event, one that can in turn be linked to a precise date. Johannes Kepler, a key figure in the 17th-century scientific revolution, suggested that the magi may have been intrigued by a series of three conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn, which occurred in 7 BC.

Others have suggested that the star may have been a comet or nova, like one reported by Chinese and Korean stargazers in about 5 BC. The reality is, of course, we'll never know for sure – especially if the star was, in fact, some kind of local phenomenon as opposed to a significant celestial event. As John Mosley, an astronomer at Griffith Observatory in California, puts it: “Maybe it was something that required interpretation, rather than something brilliant.”

If three magi did indeed follow a star to Bethlehem two millennia ago, who were they and where were they heading? A group of men called the magi certainly existed in Jesus' time. They belonged to a priestly sect from Persia (now Iran), described by the Greek historian Herodotus nearly 500 years earlier. The magi had knowledge of astronomy and the interpretation of

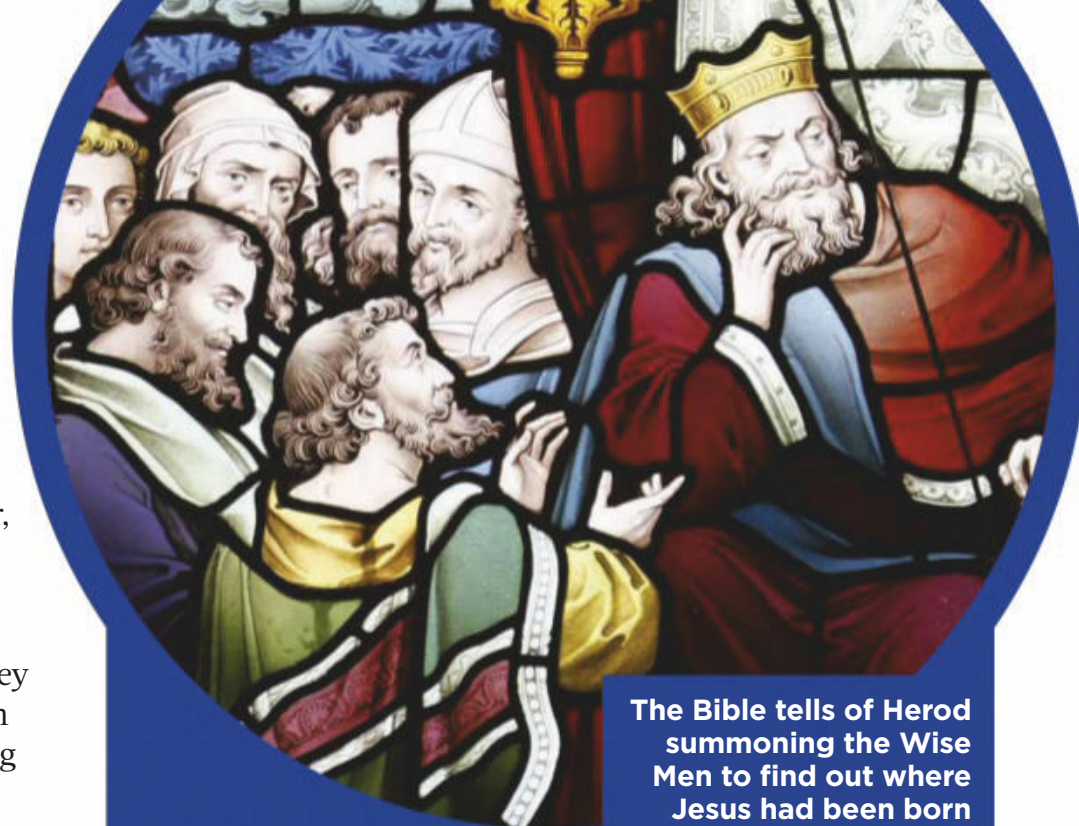
prophecy, which is supposedly how they knew it was ‘time’ for Jesus's birth. They have gone by several names: in one account from Persia they are identified as Hormizdah, Yazdegerd and Perozdh, with the Western church settling on Balthasar, Melchior and Caspar or Gaspar.

“The magi were astrologers and counsellors to kings who made predictions,” says Witherington. “They would have taken the star as a sign in the heavens from God that something major was happening.”

As to where the magi were headed, for centuries, Christians have believed that Jesus was born at the site currently occupied by Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, one of the holiest locales in the whole of Christendom. As for the abode in which he was born, that could perhaps have been a cave used to shelter livestock. Alternatively, it may well have been a split-level house favoured by peasants, with the residents living upstairs and their animals kept below. Archaeological excavations suggest that such buildings were small and dark with mud-plastered walls. These might not have been chiselled out of the bedrock, but they were no less humble for all that.

It is, of course, on 25 December that the celebrations marking Jesus's birth reach a crescendo. Yet few people now

Continues on p64



HEROD JUDEA'S PUPPET KING?

Herod the Great is one of the great bogeymen of the New Testament, the man who earned his place in infamy by ordering – so we're told – all baby boys in Bethlehem to be put to death. Herod, who reigned as King of Judea from 37 BC to 4 BC, remains a reviled figure 2,000 years later. But there are those historians who argue that he more than merited his title of ‘Great’.

Great or irredeemably cruel, Herod could never have been the dominant force in Judea without being propped up by the Romans. He was very much their man in the east, and he astutely cemented his powerbase by cultivating good relations with two of the most powerful men in the empire: first the great general Mark Antony, and then Emperor Augustus, who appointed Herod as King of Judea and twice increased his territory.

It was with Roman money that Herod earned his reputation as one of the ancient world's great builders, overseeing such architectural gems as the port of Caesarea on the Mediterranean's eastern coast, and the monumental desert stronghold of Masada that overlooks the Dead Sea. His reign also coincided with something of a cultural golden age, when historians, poets and philosophers flooded into his court.

Nonetheless his reputation as a cruel and tyrannical leader appears to be fully warranted. With age came growing paranoia and mental instability, which climaxed in the killing of his wife and two of his children. Even Emperor Augustus, not averse to acts of brutality himself, was moved to observe that it was better to be Herod's dog than his son.



Herod was famed for his colossal building projects, epitomised by the grand fortress of Masada



Animals may have been present if Jesus was born in a peasant's dwelling, or a cave

JESUS & THE NATIVITY

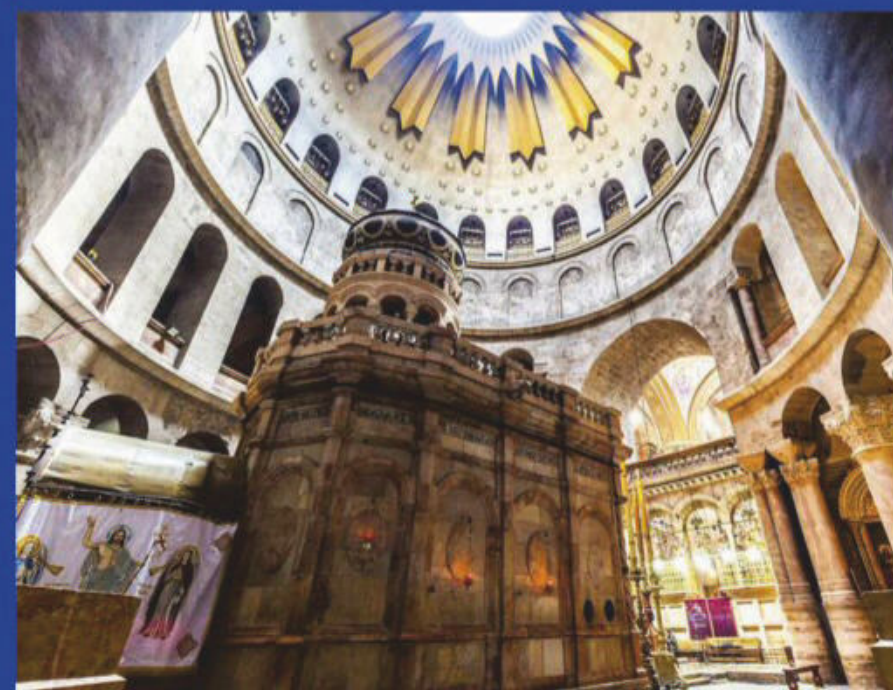
FIVE KEY LOCALES FROM THE GOSPELS

Though some of the incidents described in the gospels might be hard to verify, pinpointing where they could have taken place is not



MARY'S WELL, NAZARETH

◀ This is reputed to be the spot where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, Jesus's mother, and announced that she would bear the son of God, an event known as the annunciation. Though the current well is a non-functioning reconstruction, it sits above an underground spring that served as a watering hole for Palestinian villagers for centuries.



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, JERUSALEM

▲ For 1,600 years, Christians have believed that this church in Jerusalem's old city encloses the site of Jesus's crucifixion and burial. Since Constantine the Great dedicated it around AD 336, the church has had something of a chequered history, being destroyed by both Persian and Fatimid armies. The glass-encased Rock of Calvary, where the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place, is the church's most-visited area today.

GETHSEMANE, JERUSALEM

▲ Overlooking eastern Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives sits a site that will forever be associated with anguish and spiritual struggle – the garden of Gethsemane. It was here, according to the gospels, that Jesus agonised over his fate immediately after the Last Supper, telling God that “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”



AL-MAGHTAS, RIVER JORDAN

◀ The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist is believed to have taken place at Al-Maghtas, on the east bank of the River Jordan. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Al-Maghta is considered so important to Jesus's story that it has attracted popes and heads of state.



THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM

◀▼ The Church of the Nativity is one of Christendom's holiest sites. The basilica here is the oldest major church in the Holy Land, founded by the Roman emperor Constantine the Great in the AD 320s. But it is the grotto, a level below the main church – where a silver star marks the spot where, it's believed, Jesus was born – that has proved most alluring for visitors for 1,600 years.



DID YOU KNOW?

Some Christians believe that the clothes in which baby Jesus was swaddled during his Presentation at the Temple in Jerusalem are stored in 12th-century Dubrovnik Cathedral in Croatia.



DID YOU KNOW?
According to *The Life of St Francis of Assisi* by St Bonaventure, a Franciscan friar, it was St Francis who staged the first nativity scene in 1223, setting up a manger with hay and two live animals.

Mistletoe was harvested by druids, and offered as a blessing



The tradition of dragging a (Yule) log indoors to be burnt over Christmas was also observed in Britain

In the British Isles, druids cut mistletoe and gave it as a blessing to mark the winter solstice. In Scandinavia, people marked the 'Yule' festival by dragging evergreens indoors and setting logs alight. And, above all, in Rome, revellers had long celebrated the festival of Saturnalia with an orgy of drinking and eating in honour of Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture.

Christmas may not have been particularly original, but it was fantastically successful. First called the Feast of the Nativity, the festival had spread to Egypt by AD 432 and to England by the end of the sixth century. By the end of the eighth century, it was being celebrated as far away as Scandinavia. Its prominence in the calendar only increased after Charlemagne was crowned 'Emperor of the Romans' on Christmas Day in AD 800. By the time William the Conqueror was crowned King of England at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day in 1066, it was well on its way to becoming the cultural behemoth it is today.

Back in the Conqueror's day, few would have doubted the historical credibility of the nativity story. Today,

in our age of greater scepticism, attitudes have, of course, changed. But does it really matter if the census, the magi and star of Bethlehem are fact or fiction? Should Christians be more concerned with the message that the events surrounding Jesus's birth convey? Again, that depends who you ask.

"It's important to understand that history and theology are interwoven in biblical history, and nothing about the life of Jesus can be theologically true that is historically false," opines Ben Witherington.

Dr Helen Bond, professor of Christian origins at the University of Edinburgh, has a different take. "I don't think it's necessary to believe that all those details are historical," she told a BBC documentary in 2013. "I think that the theology of these stories is what's important, and that, in the end, is what these authors were trying to get across." 🎯

GET HOOKED

LISTEN

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argue that this is the precise date on which the events described by Luke and Matthew took place. "The story about shepherds in the fields with flocks may suggest that the birth of Jesus actually took place in spring," says Witherington.

So how did 25 December come to be universally accepted as the official date of the Christmas festival? The answer appears to be because this was already a time of year when people across Europe were used to letting their hair down. By the fourth century AD, midwinter festivals – marking the moment when the Sun started coming back and the days got longer – were a well-established fixture in the pagan calendar.

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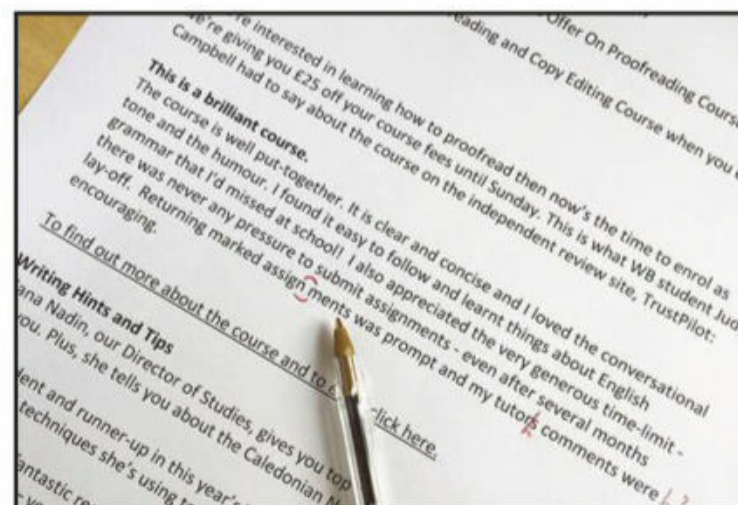
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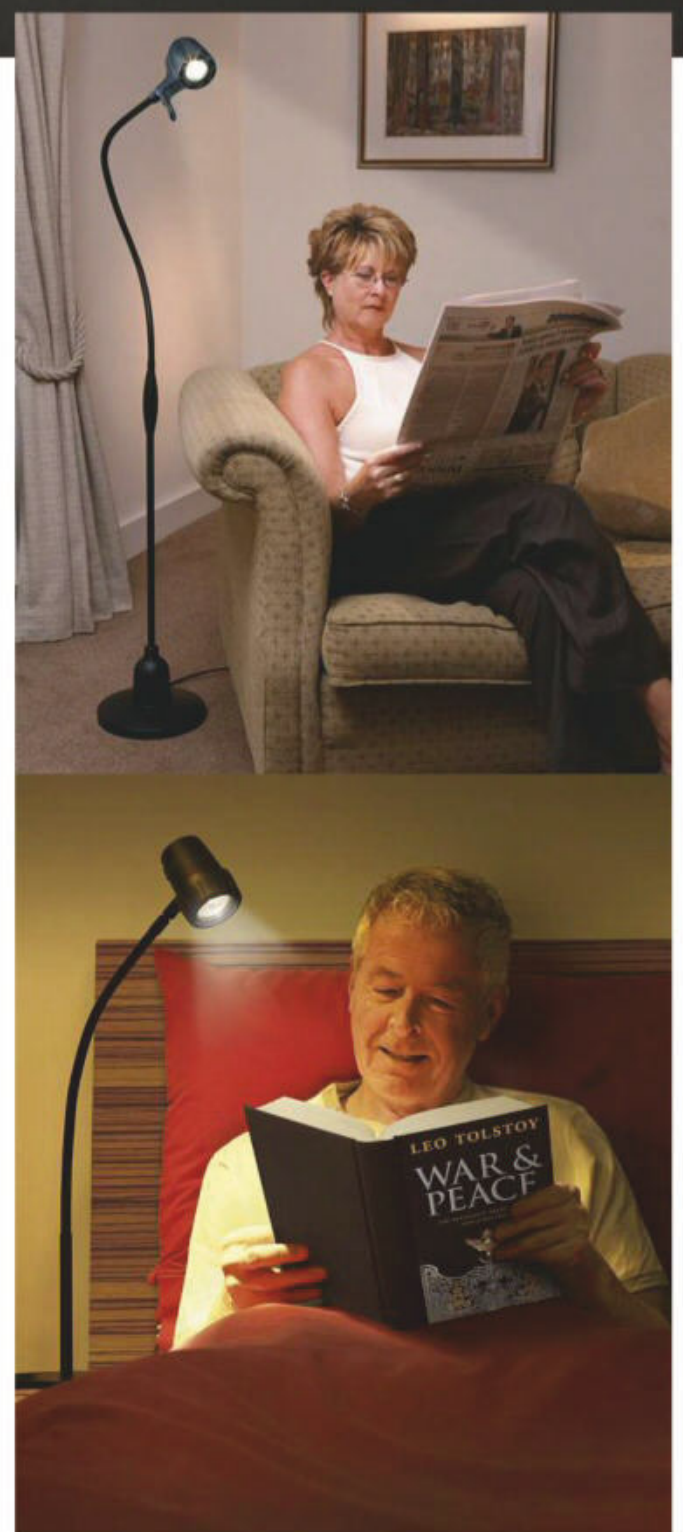
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Five names are commonly held as titans among the Founding Fathers: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, George Washington, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton (*l-r*). Four of them would serve as presidents of the young United States

AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS

With constitutional issues currently defining politics on both sides of the Atlantic, **Nige Tassell** tells the story of how the Founding Fathers drew up the US Constitution, laying down the blueprint for modern democratic government

THE END OF THE AFFAIR

The drafting committee presents the soon-to-be famous Declaration to the Second Continental Congress in John Trumbull's enormous (12 by 18 feet) oil-on-canvas. The draft, which absolves the 13 colonies of "all allegiance to the British Crown", was the culmination of 11 years of resistance to British taxes raised to pay for wars against France. With some irony, it was French intervention in the American War of Independence that swung the conflict in the colonists' favour.

GEORGIAN GRIEF

The 1,320-word document lists 27 specific grievances against King George III and the British Crown.

THE COMMITTEE OF FIVE

John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin (*l-r*) prepared the document outlining the justifications for independence.

The most famous portrait of the Founding Fathers of the United States is that committed to canvas by the 19th-century artist John Trumbull, depicting five Fathers presenting the Declaration of Independence to bewigged members of Congress in 1776 (*pictured above*). It's a tableau that has scorched itself onto the American psyche ever since: these wise, learned men, architects of a new nation, delivering the first stage of their blueprint for this just-born country.

The Declaration – the document that hailed a new, independent republic,

its previous British rulers having been banished back across the Atlantic – was but one epochal moment delivered by the Founding Fathers. Eleven years later, they collectively penned the United States Constitution, the political and

“MORE BITE WAS NEEDED; NATIONAL UNITY WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY”

legal framework whose parameters, more than two centuries on, continue to define one of the world's great superpowers.

Before the guns had fallen silent after the American War of Independence and a republic declared, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union had been drawn up, effectively forming the newly minted United States' first constitution. Compiled between mid-1776 and late 1777, and ratified over time by the 13 states, these articles actually bequeathed little authority to central government, as represented by the Continental Congress, a gathering of representatives from each of the former

THE NATION BUILDERS

Five notable Founding Fathers

GEORGE WASHINGTON

As the man who presided over the Philadelphia Convention that drew up the US Constitution, George Washington was the obvious choice to become the republic's first president. Oft regarded as the true father of the nation, he once declared that "the Constitution is the guide which I will never abandon".



JOHN ADAMS

The leading advocate of the Declaration of Independence in Congress, John Adams served as Washington's vice-president before succeeding him in 1797 (his son, John Quincy Adams, later became the sixth president). Adams Sr died on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, just hours after Thomas Jefferson passed away.



THOMAS JEFFERSON

As a Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson's greatest contribution to US history was being the principal author of the Declaration of Independence. He later served as Secretary of State under George Washington and, in 1801, defeated John Adams to become the third president of the US.



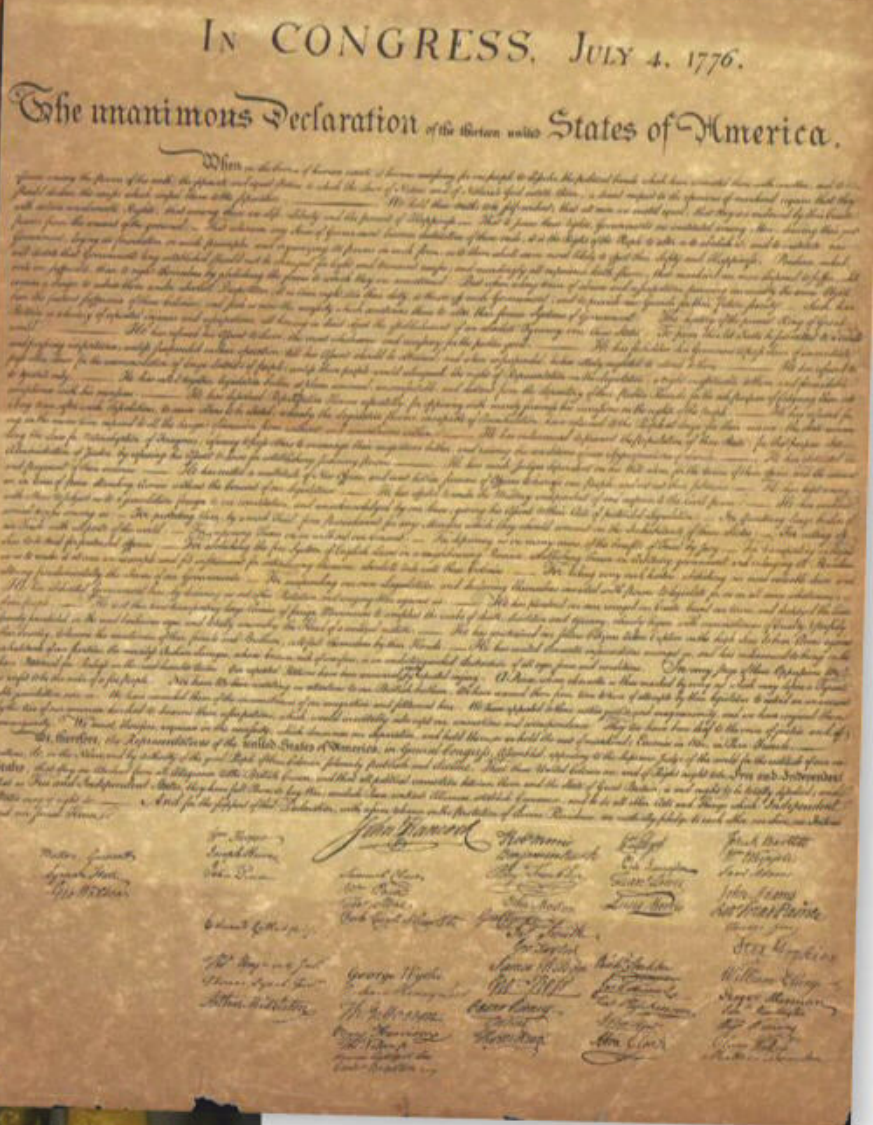
JAMES MADISON

James Madison is known as the father of the Constitution for playing a crucial part in its formulation, particularly in the drafting of the ten amendments that would become the Bill of Rights. He became the republic's fourth president, serving two terms of office between 1809 and 1817.



ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Born illegitimate in the West Indies and raised as an orphan, Alexander Hamilton made a remarkable rise through American politics and was the most prolific contributor to the influential *Federalist Papers*. More than 200 years later, he is the subject of award-winning musical Hamilton.



SIGNATURE LOOK

The Declaration was presented to John Hancock, the president of the Congress. His is the lead (and largest signature) and today his name is a synonym for signatures in general.

against the dusty regimes of Old Europe – was in danger of collapsing in on itself. Intervention was required.

WAR OF WORDS

In February 1787, the federal legislature – the Congress of the Confederation – commissioned a meeting of state delegates to map out a more stable, more formidable system of central government. Held in Philadelphia, the convention was called with the "sole and express purpose of revising the Articles of Convention", in order to "render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the Union". Prospects for the success of the convention didn't look great when, on the opening day, only Pennsylvania and Virginia's delegates turned up. The convention was rescheduled for 11 days later, when seven states were represented, a figure that, as the discussions developed, eventually rose to 12, with only Rhode Island resisting the invitation.

Two clear proposals were on the table when it came to deciding the structure of a new federal legislature. The Virginia Plan set out a two-chamber Congress, with the level of each state's representation determined proportionately by the size of its population. The other proposal, the New Jersey Plan, posited the idea of a single-chamber legislature with each state having just a single representative – a scheme that gave the less populous

colonies. This executive could make decisions but, with each decision requiring all 13 state legislatures to agree to them before they could become law, it was rather a toothless body.

More bite was needed; national unity was in short supply. None of the states made all of the payments requested of them; some, such as Connecticut, made none. And when it came to defending itself, the new country was largely powerless, its troops chronically underfunded and underpowered against the might of any potentially aggressive colonial power. The entire republican project – deemed highly radical when set

states the same amount of voting power as larger states.

In mid-July 1787, after much debate and no small amount of rancour, the make-up of the federal legislature was decreed. Three branches of government were to be created: the legislative branch, which would make the laws; the executive branch, which would enforce the laws; and the judicial branch, to interpret the laws.

Forming the legislature proved the most divisive, resulting in the ‘Great Compromise’ – the upper house, the Senate, would have two senators from each state, the identity of whom would be determined by each state’s own legislature. The other chamber, the House of Representatives, would work on the system of proportional representation set out by the Virginia Plan, with the more heavily populated states having more representatives. These representatives would be directly elected by the people – or, at least, those sections of society permitted to cast votes.

TRIPLE THREAT

Then it came to defining the functions and powers of the executive branch. This was even trickier. Many states had weak executives themselves – figures appointed to just a single year in office without the authority to veto or appoint. The outlier was New York; its governor, emboldened by a three-year term, retained both these powers. It was this model that was most closely adhered to when the federal executive

was established; a strong figure was believed to be necessary to perform the role of national unifier and defender of the republic.

Underpinning the political structure was a system of checks and balances, wherein the powers of each of the three branches of government – the executive, the legislature and the judiciary – were, when needed, clipped and curtailed by the other two. The intention was to avoid cultivating the kind of undemocratic rule that had characterised the colonial years. The danger was, though, that it could lead to stalemate, what the political historian Richard Hofstadter later described as “a harmonious system of mutual frustration”.

That July, a Confederation of Detail was set up to draft a detailed constitution, followed, in September, by a Committee on Style and Arrangement to fine-tune the document. When presented at the final Convention, there was notable disappointment – disquiet, even – when it came to scrutinising the end product. Of the 55 delegates, 39 signed the document, but three refused and others left before the signing ceremony. One signee, the polymath Benjamin Franklin, told the

Philadelphia Convention that there were “several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am sure I shall never approve them”. Franklin was sanguine. “I expect no better and ... I am not sure that it is not the best.”

The Constitution was then placed before the Congress of the Confederation, which voted to send it to the state legislatures for ratification. Congress had given no recommendations to the states as to how to receive and consider the document. There was, though, clear opposition to its objectives and contents.

RISK OF A KING

Anti-federalist factions, philosophically opposed to the notion of a powerful central government, held a number of grievances. They believed that a presidency with such strong authority could eventually evolve into the kind of monarchical head of state that the revolution had been fought against. They also believed the constitution’s system of checks and balances wasn’t stringent enough when it came to the judiciary’s remit. In short, the anti-federalists were suspicious of any mechanism or body that weakened the powers of the legislature – de facto, the powers of the states’ representatives.

Their arguments were countered in a series of essays known as *The Federalist Papers*. Authored by the statesmen Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay, these were a conscious effort to raise approval for the Constitution to ensure its ratification. The authors were setting out to establish “good government from reflection and choice”, rather than being “forever destined to depend, for their political constitutions, on accident and force”.

The federalist argument won the day. On 21 June 1788, the new Constitution was ratified by nine states, the minimum number required by Article VII of the Constitution itself. By the end of July, that figure was up to 11. The following March, both houses of Congress sat for the first time, but it would be a month before either was quorate, and thus neither chamber was able to vote on any proposal brought before it.

The following month, the first President of the United States was sworn in. Any reluctance in distilling so much executive power into just one man’s hands was at least partially assuaged by the fact that there was one outstanding candidate for the role: George Washington. That November, North Carolina became the 12th state to ratify

“A STRONG FIGURE
WAS NEEDED TO
PERFORM THE ROLE
OF NATIONAL UNIFIER”

Lin-Manuel Miranda stars as the titular Founding Father in *Hamilton: An American Musical*



HAMMING IT UP

Alexander Hamilton’s contributions reach far beyond the *The Federalist Papers* – as the first Secretary of the Treasury he founded much of the new nation’s financial system, and was also behind the launch of the US Coast Guard and the

New York Post.

TESTING THE CONSTITUTION

How the Founding Fathers' blueprint has shaped US political history

THE MEANING OF EQUALITY

► The wording of the US Constitution, and its subsequent 27 amendments, has been subject to much interpretation across the centuries. In 1954, the case of *Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka* – brought by an African-American father wishing to send his daughter to a white school closer to their home – ruled that an 1896 judgement had misinterpreted the meaning of the 14th Amendment. That earlier ruling, in the case of *Plessy vs Ferguson*, had upheld state-sponsored segregation by interpreting that “equal protection of the law” could still be delivered in a system of racial segregation. The 1954 case undid that ruling, determining that the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine violated the 14th Amendment, thus setting in motion the (admittedly long) process of desegregation. Integrated classes at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, subsequently began in September 1957, with nine black students (including 15-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, pictured right on her first day) attending the school accompanied by armed guard.



A MATTER OF SEX

▲ Sometimes, the inadequacy of the US Constitution has been exposed. In the 1874 *Minor vs Happersett* case, brought by suffragist Virginia Minor, the Supreme Court determined that the Founding Fathers had not granted women the right to vote (“if it had been intended to make all citizens of the United States voters, the framers of the Constitution would not have left it up to implication”). The ruling was eventually quashed 45 years later by the succinctly worded 19th Amendment: “The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

TRICKY DICKY GETS UNSTUCK

▼ The downfall of the 37th President of the United States in 1974 was a measure of how secure the Founding Fathers' concept of checks and balances between the three branches of national government was. Strongly suspected of misleading the country over his knowledge of a politically motivated break-in at the Watergate Hotel, Nixon was ordered by the Supreme Court to surrender secret recordings of Oval Office phone conversations. Congress then began impeachment proceedings against the president, who resigned when he realised he had insufficient support in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.



CONSTITUTION IN NUMBERS

\$30

The amount paid to Pennsylvania General Assembly clerk Jacob Shallus to write the Constitution

**27**

The number of times amendments have been added to the Constitution since 1789

**26**

Age of the youngest signatory – Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey

**81**

Age of the oldest person to sign – Benjamin Franklin

4,543

Words in the US Constitution (including signatures)

**2**

The number of future US presidents who signed the Constitution – George Washington and James Madison

**4 million**

The US population when the Constitution was signed. Today it is more than 329 million

**A STITCH IN TIME**

Though 4 July is the date that has become ingrained in global consciousness, it is not the date that the Declaration of Independence was signed, only approved by Congress. The signing didn't take place until 2 August.

the Constitution, with Rhode Island following suit six months later. The approval of all 13 states was complete.

THE RIGHTS IDEA

Very soon, though, it was clear that there were notable omissions in the ratified document. With the Constitution largely covering the branches of government, the anti-federalists had vociferously argued for the inclusion of a Bill of Rights to protect the individual citizen. About this, they were correct, and James Madison quickly set about drafting a series of amendments to bolster the new Constitution. These proposed amendments – establishing such personal rights as freedom of religion, the right to bear arms and the right to a proper judicial trial – were whittled down, by the states' respective ratification processes, from Madison's original 12 to ten.

This ten-point Bill of Rights was enshrined in law by the end of 1791. It remains the backbone of citizens' rights in the US and has been, due to societal changes since the 18th century, reinforced by a further 17 amendments to the Constitution over the intervening two centuries. Historian Hugh Brogan observes, "like the main part of the Constitution, these articles expressed a fundamental part of what the American Revolutionaries had fought for. They were not only democrats – the sense that they believed in the rights of the people, as opposed to kings and nobles – they

were liberals, in the sense that they believed in the inalienable rights proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. And now these rights were spelled out".

That 27 amendments to the US Constitution have been made is understandable; the age of the Founding Fathers is hugely different to that of today. Some commentators have been less charitable. In 1987, the year of the Constitution's bicentenary, Supreme

“THE TEN-POINT BILL OF RIGHTS REMAINS THE BACKBONE OF US CITIZENS' RIGHTS”

Court Justice Thurgood Marshall declared that he believed that “the government they [the Founding Fathers] devised was defective from the start, requiring several amendments, a civil war and momentous social transformation to attain the system of constitutional government and its respect for the individuals and human rights we hold fundamental today”.

The historian Gordon Leidner would agree that there were shortcomings with not only the original Constitution but also those first ten amendments. “Noteworthy is the fact that, originally, the Bill of

Rights implicitly excluded the rights of Native Americans, African Americans and women. These omissions would later result in war and significant civil strife.” Indeed, the Founding Fathers had drafted a constitution for their times. After all, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington were slave owners.

However limited the detail, the constitutional framework the Founding Fathers constructed has undeniably had lasting success and influence. “For decades, people around the world have replaced corrupt, oppressive governments with constitutional democracies,” explains RB Bernstein. “The model of ‘political building’ they follow is American, even if they devise their own constitutional architecture.”

The fundamental principle of checks and balances has produced a federal political system that, over many tests over the decades, has proven to be more than sturdy. “It continues to give us good reason to honour the men of the American Revolution,” says Brogan. “In a way, it defines what is politically best and most promising in the United States; what it means to be American.”

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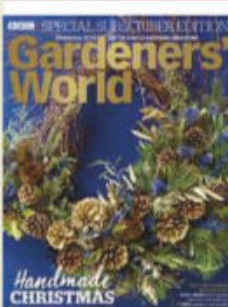


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KING OF BOMBS

An explosion from the initially proposed design of the Tsar Bomba - with a yield of 100 megatons - would have almost certainly destroyed the plane that dropped it



DID YOU KNOW?

CASTLE IN THE SKY

When the US detonated the test bomb Castle Bravo on 1 March 1954 at Bikini Atoll, its yield was more than 2.5 times what had been predicted. Radiation from the blast spread as far as Australia, India and the US mainland, with traces detected in Europe.

WHAT WAS THE LARGEST NUCLEAR BLAST?



Little Boy, which was dropped on Hiroshima in August 1945, had a yield of 15 kilotons (or 15,000 tons of TNT), while the Nagasaki bomb, Fat Man, reached 22 kilotons. These remain the only nuclear weapons used in warfare to date, but the constant Cold War testing of more nuclear bombs meant that their destructive power was quickly dwarfed.

On 30 October 1961, the Soviet Union tested hydrogen weapon RDS-220, although it became better known as Tsar Bomba,

King of the Bombs. Its explosion over the Novaya Zemlya archipelago in the Arctic Ocean had a yield of 50 megatons - 50 million tons of TNT - and a mushroom cloud 37 miles high. Terrifyingly, Tsar Bomba had been designed to be twice as powerful, but the extent of the nuclear fallout from such a blast forced the Soviets to tone it down. They concluded the bomb could not practically be used in war, but as a propaganda weapon its impact was enormous.



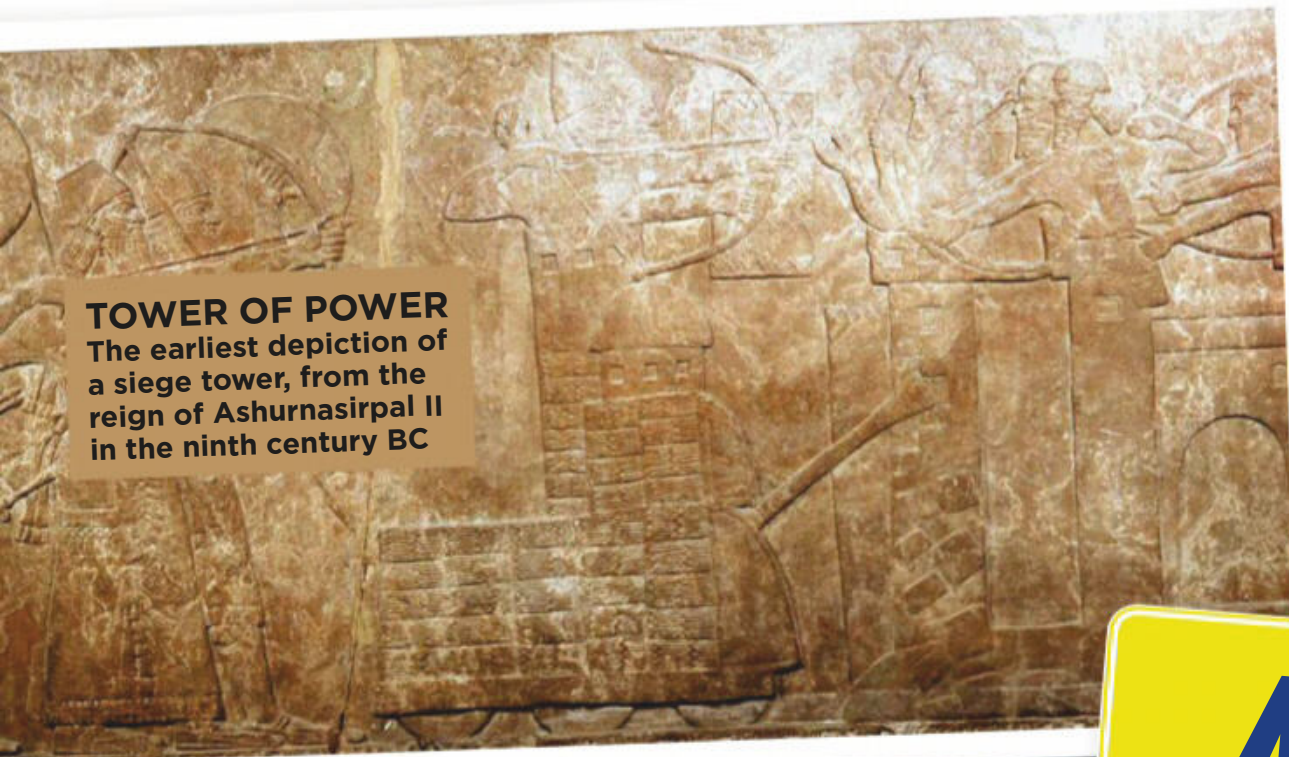
THE BOMB THAT BOMBED

The Soviets recognised that Tsar Bomba posed too much of a danger to be used

ALAMY X1, GETTY IMAGES X1

TOWER OF POWER

The earliest depiction of a siege tower, from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II in the ninth century BC



When was the first siege tower used?

Target A relief from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, King of Assyria in the ninth century BC, shows a battle scene of an army attacking a town with the help of what looks like a building on wheels. A battering ram sticks out and is knocking the walls down, while archers are firing from the top.

The Assyrians, masters of ancient warfare, were among the first to develop the siege engine. This relief is the oldest-known depiction – but for the biggest and most intimidating ancient siege tower, look no further than the Helepolis, or ‘Taker of

Cities’. This Macedonian-built monster stood 45 metres high, weighed 150-160 tons and needed thousands of men working in relays to move.

Inside the tower were multiple levels, each with weapons ranging from catapults to oversized crossbows. Accounts say that the Helepolis saw battle at the siege of Rhodes in 305 BC, although it ran into trouble as the defenders flooded the ground in front of the wall; the tower got bogged down in the mud.

4

The number of World War I veterans who went on to become Prime Minister of Britain: Winston Churchill, Clement Attlee, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan.

Why do so few Greek bronzes survive?

Target Although so much art from ancient civilisations has been lost, surviving Greek bronzes are especially worth their weight in gold. They used to be everywhere in the Hellenistic world, standing on street corners, inside temples or offering a decorative focal point in the homes of the wealthy. Travellers and writers marvelled at the

number of bronzes in Greece, including Pliny the Elder, who claimed that Rhodes alone had 3,000, and Pausanias, who noted 69 giant statues of Olympic victors at Olympia. Nothing of these has been found except stone bases.

Fewer than 30 substantially intact bronzes remain. It turned out that bronze was just too recyclable. People looked at the remarkably life-like statues and saw not works of art, but valuable metal – so melted down the bronze to make items deemed more useful, such as coins and weapons.

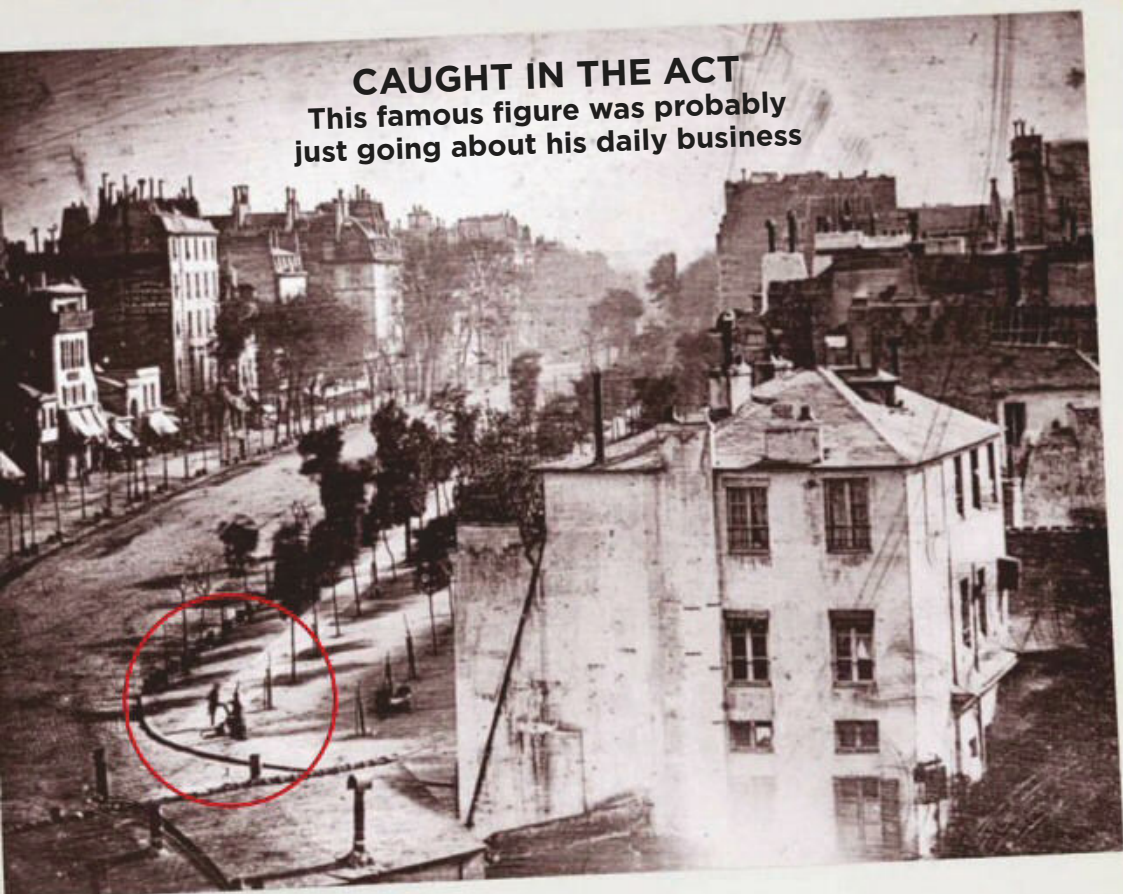
The Romans were prime culprits, although they did help some Greek masterpieces live on – in a way – by stealing the designs to make marble copies. Mostly, Greek bronzes survived by accident. Shipwrecks sent many to the bottom of the sea, to be preserved and found millennia later.

GOD’S GIFT The Artemision Bronze, representing either Zeus or Poseidon, was one of several recovered from the ocean



CAUGHT IN THE ACT

This famous figure was probably just going about his daily business



WHO WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED?

Target Pure chance allowed the first human in history to have their picture taken. When, in 1838, French inventor Louis Daguerre set up his camera overlooking Boulevard du Temple in Paris, it needed an exposure time of seven to ten minutes. This was drastically shorter than the eight hours needed on earlier photographic processes, but still too long to

pick up the many people and vehicles on the bustling street.

Yet when he examined his photo, or daguerreotype, he noticed a man on the pavement. With one leg raised, the unknown figure may have been having his shoes shined, meaning he stayed still long enough to be captured. Or was he pulling a heroic, debonair pose for the camera?

WHAT WAS A ZOOT SUIT?

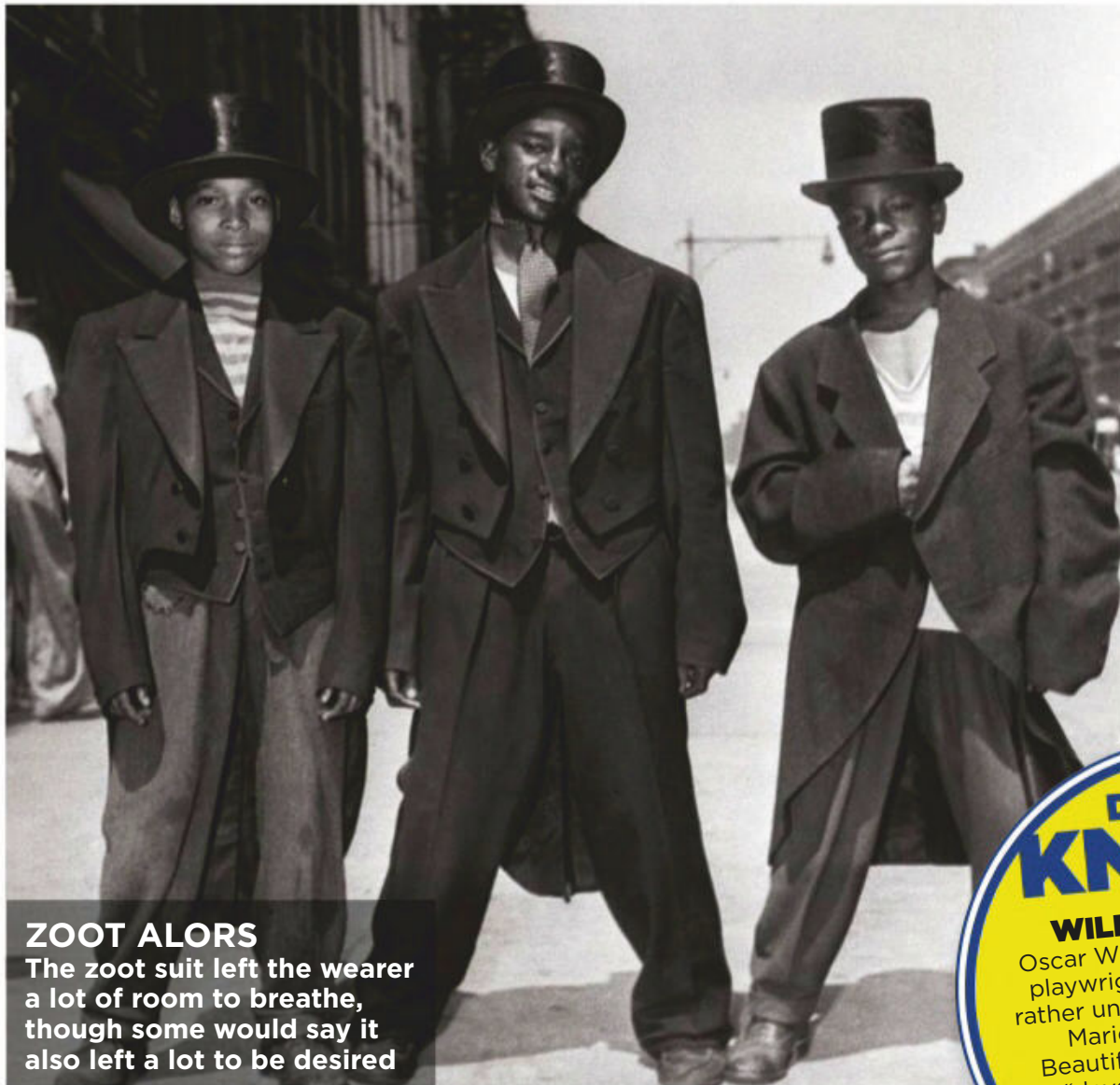
🎯 A lot of material went into making a zoot suit, distinctive for its huge-shoulder-padded, wide-lapelled, knee-length jacket and high-waisted, peg-leg trousers.

The flamboyant attire became popular among Hispanic and African-American communities in the US during the 1940s. But to some, the zoot suit used far too much material to be appropriate at a time of war rationing, and so its wearers were deemed to be unpatriotic delinquents.

The rising racial tensions associated with the snappy suit spilled over in

June 1943 with the Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles. What began as brawls between off-duty US servicemen and young Hispanics escalated into days of widespread, racially motivated violence, as mobs of Navy personnel and civilians alike stripped anyone wearing a zoot suit, with the clothing then burned.

By the time order had been restored, LA City Council had banned the zoot suit, but the damage had been done, both to the outfit's reputation and to the hundreds of bloodied and beaten men who had worn it.



ZOOT ALORS

The zoot suit left the wearer a lot of room to breathe, though some would say it also left a lot to be desired

Who lived in 10 Downing Street before the PM?

🎯 It was the site of a medieval brewery before the first residential house was leased to Sir Thomas Knyvet, the man who arrested Guy Fawkes. But by the time King George II presented the later townhouse – built by Sir George Downing in the 1680s – to his First Lord of the Treasury and de facto Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole in 1735, refurbishments were

needed. As part of the work, the house was joined to two neighbouring properties, one occupant of which had to be convinced to move further down the street. All that is known about him is his name: Mr Chicken.

And so, the Prime Minister moved into 10 Downing Street. Except he didn't. The house was actually number five, and wouldn't pick up the famous ten until 1779.



MEDIEVAL MARVEL

St Leonard's Hospital in York was a medieval anomaly in that it was large – it could shelter more than 200 people

WHAT WERE MEDIEVAL HOSPITALS LIKE?

🎯 Perhaps surprisingly, considering the images the words 'medieval healthcare' typically evoke, hundreds of hospitals opened in England between the Norman Conquest and the 16th century. None of them, however, could be described as hospitals by today's understanding of the word. The name comes from the Latin 'hospitalis' and stood for hospitality towards guests – not the sick or injured, but those seeking shelter. The sick could be turned away if deemed to be contagious.

The patients – called inmates or brothers and sisters – could be the poor, infirm and pilgrims willing to pay, pray or work for lodging, food and clothing. There were also hospitals for lepers, but it was more likely they'd be left rather than treated. Instead of doctors there were monks and nuns, who focused on spiritual welfare more than physical, so could enforce daily worship, and hospitals tended to be small, with space enough for just a couple of dozen inmates.

For actual healthcare, you'd have to see a physician and take your luck: standard medieval medical practices included bloodletting, astrology and blaming demons.

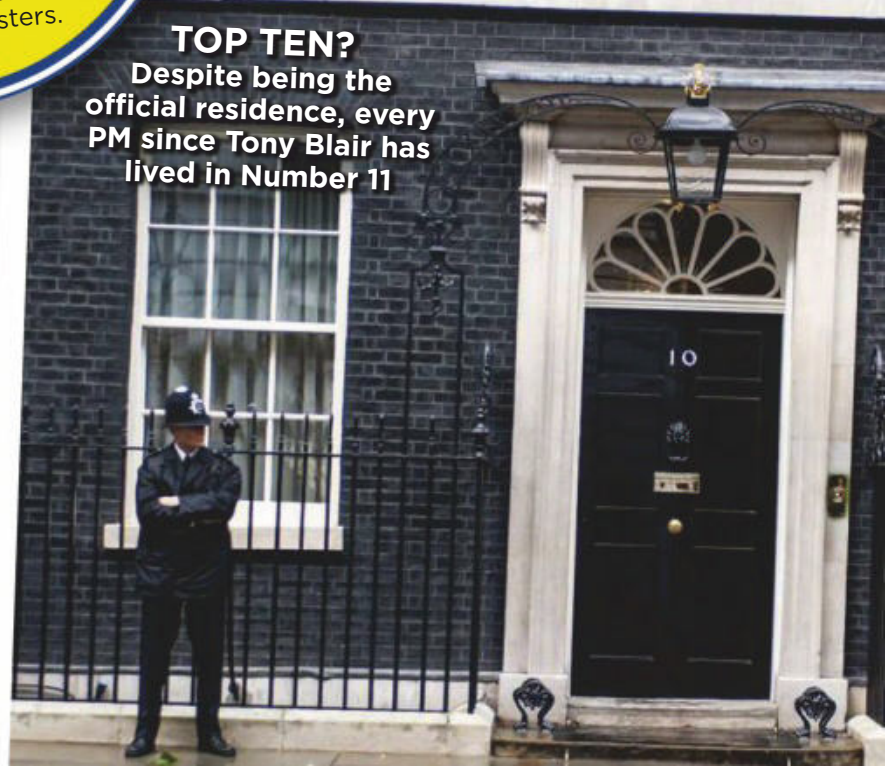
DID YOU KNOW?

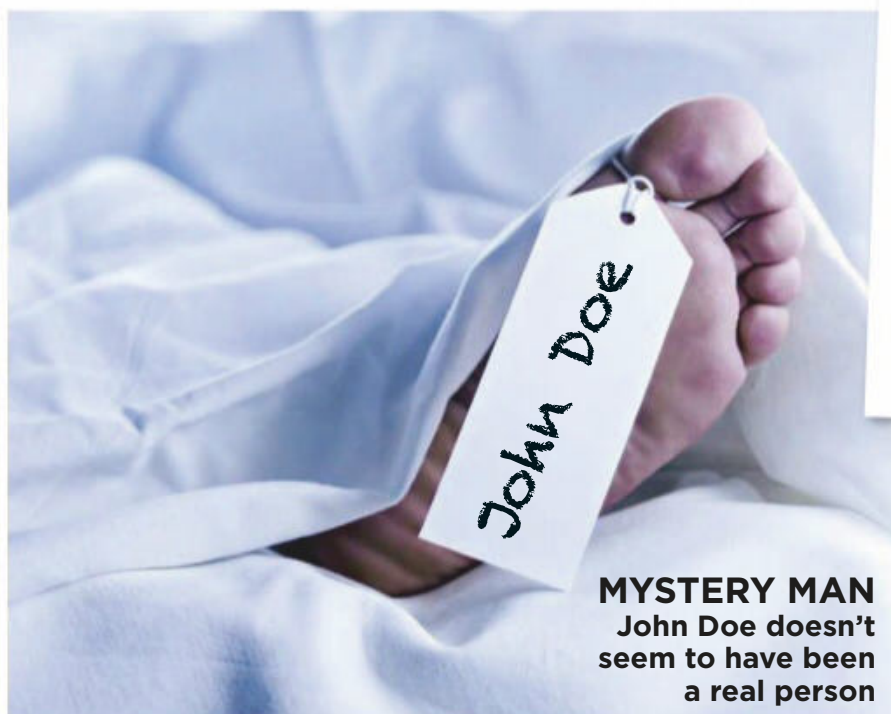
WILDE INVENTION

Oscar Wilde, the Irish poet and playwright, put his name on a rather unusual product: Madame Marie Fontaine's Bosom Beautifier, which promises to "develop the bust" of any woman. He even allowed his face to appear on the advertising posters.

TOP TEN?

Despite being the official residence, every PM since Tony Blair has lived in Number 11





MYSTERY MAN
John Doe doesn't seem to have been a real person

Why do we say **John Doe**?



There's no real person named John Doe with a compelling story about being misidentified or missing. Using John and Jane Doe instead comes from an archaic legal process. Starting in mid-14th-century England, the action of ejectment was a way for landlords to take legal action against unwanted tenants or squatters. A loophole around the convoluted laws meant fictitious people could be named in the action as the plaintiff and defendant, and – for reasons unknown – John Doe and Richard Roe came to be used. By the time the practice ended in 1852, the names had stuck. Is there a significance that both these names refer to deer? We simply don't know – oh deer.

2.3m

The number of blocks of stone estimated to make up the Great Pyramid of Giza.

DOUBLE CROSSER
Soviet spy John Cairncross (*inset*) was portrayed by Allen Leech in *The Imitation Game*



WERE THERE ANY SPIES AT BLETCHLEY PARK?



A glaring error in the 2014 film *The Imitation Game* comes when Alan Turing discovers a Soviet spy in his team, but hides the news in fear of the man in question – John Cairncross – revealing Turing's homosexuality. But the film at least got right the name of the real-life Bletchley spy.

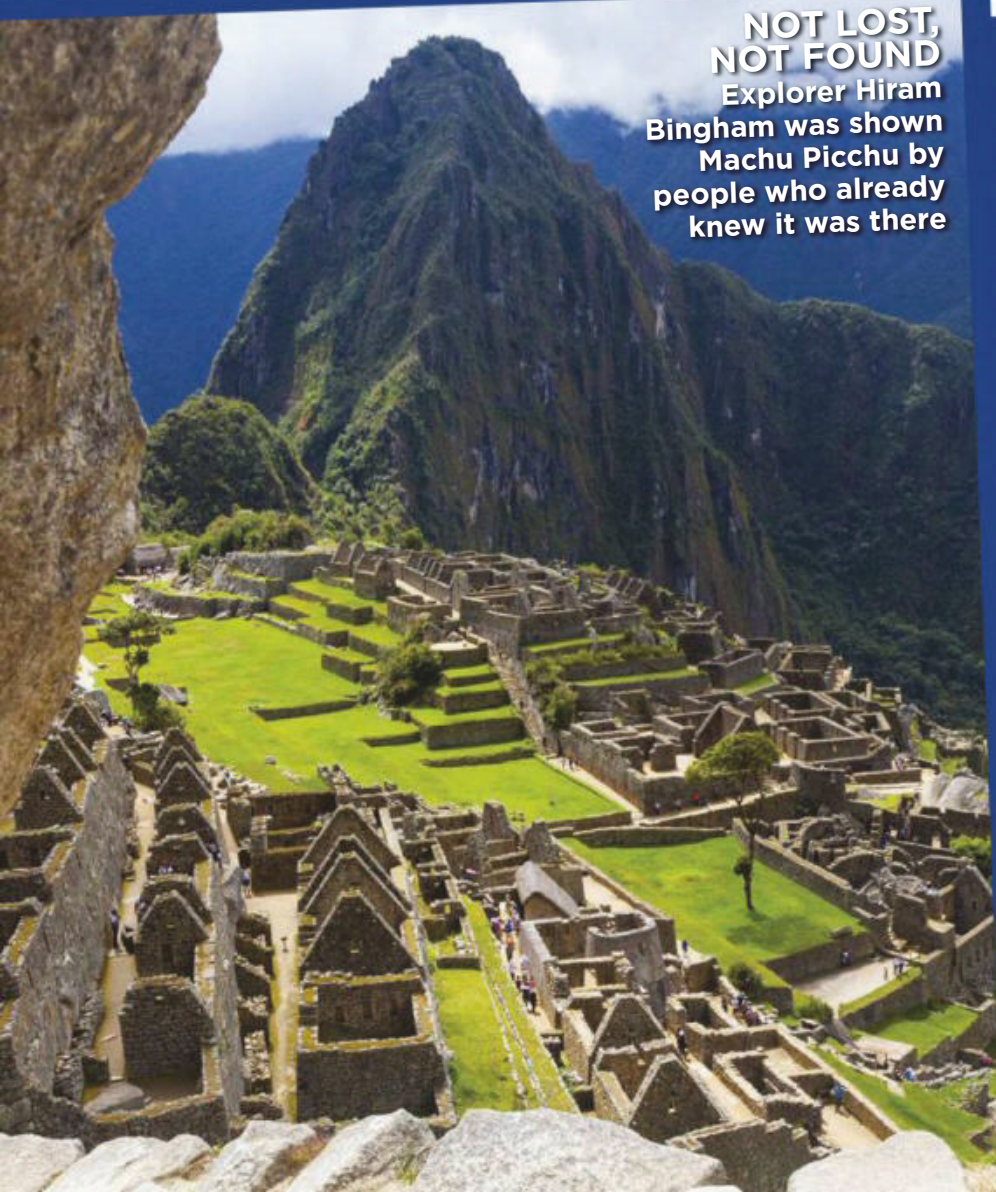
Cairncross, a gifted linguist fluent in German, worked at Bletchley as a translator – so had zero contact with Turing – while also spying. The Soviets may have been Britain's ally, but that didn't mean they were given the top-secret fruits of Bletchley's codebreaking operations. The

communist Scot snuck out thousands of decrypted German messages, some of which helped the Russians at the brutal Battle of Kursk, before being transferred in 1944. To MI6.

Cairncross's espionage and connection to a communist spy ring called the Cambridge Five was later revealed, but the British authorities chose not to prosecute, possibly to avoid embarrassment, or because they made a deal. For the rest of his life, Cairncross insisted that he never passed on information that endangered British troops, the war effort or Bletchley's secrecy.

Of course, Bletchley wouldn't have had the success it did, or remained unknown until the 1970s, if a bunch of Nazi spies had successfully infiltrated the Park.

NOT LOST, NOT FOUND
Explorer Hiram Bingham was shown Machu Picchu by people who already knew it was there



WHEN WAS MACHU PICCHU DISCOVERED?



The legendary lost city of the Incas was discovered in 1911 by American explorer Hiram Bingham – except it hadn't been lost and he didn't discover it. The Indiana Jones-style adventurer and Yale University professor launched an expedition to South America in the hope of locating the Incan citadel of Vilcabamba, where the emperor Manco Inca had led a final, doomed guerrilla campaign against the marauding Spanish.

Bingham thought his search was at an end when, in Peru, a local man named Melchor Arteaga offered to lead him to an ancient city high up the mountains of the Andes. While the

Incan settlement had remained hidden from the Spanish, the locals knew all about the ruins. They called it Old Peak, or Machu Picchu.

After hours of exhausting hiking, Bingham reached the site, 2,430 metres above sea level. He gazed upon an architectural wonder: "A great flight of beautifully constructed stone terraces ... I found myself confronted with the walls of ruined houses built of the finest quality of Inca stonework," he said.

It wasn't Vilcabamba, but possibly a royal retreat built around 1450 by emperor Pachacuti. Actually, Bingham had already been at Vilcabamba earlier that year, but didn't know it. The site wouldn't be identified until 1964.

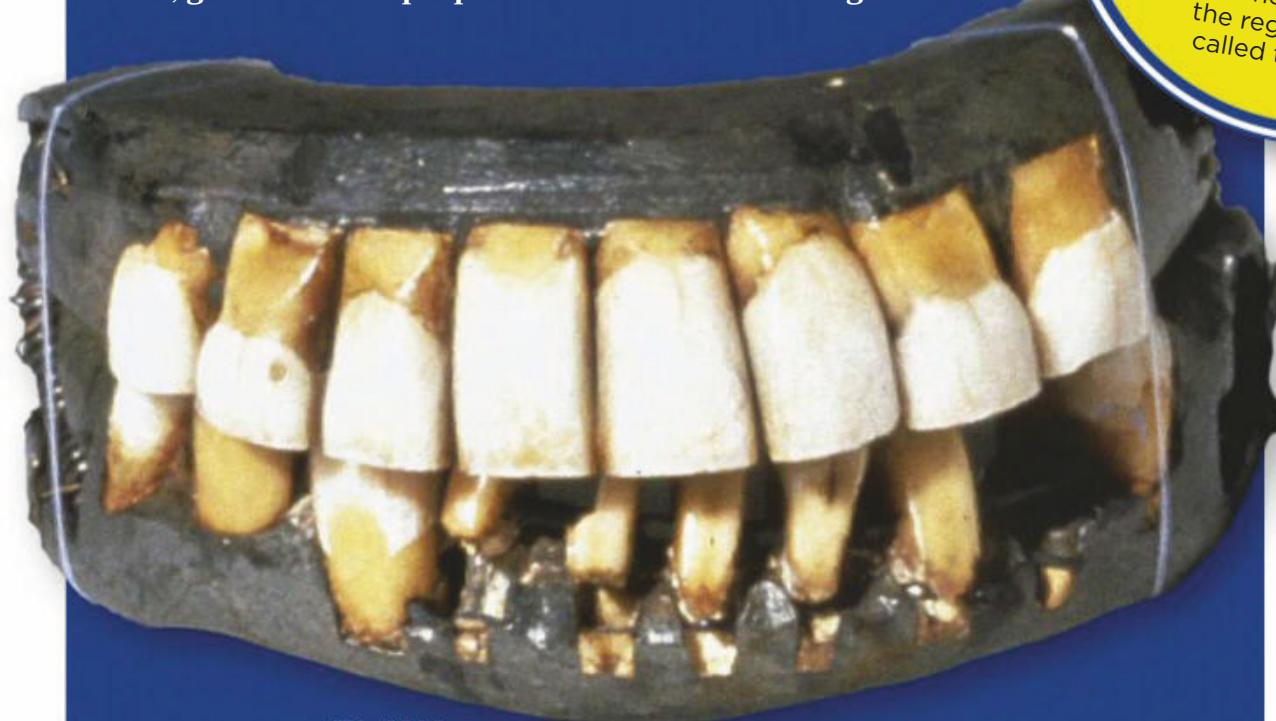
IS IT TRUE GEORGE WASHINGTON HAD WOODEN TEETH?

Target Despite the oft-repeated tale that the first US President had dentures whittled from wood, there's no tooth to the story.

It is true that George Washington had such debilitating dental problems that he only had one of his own teeth remaining at his inauguration in 1789, and relied on several sets of dentures during his lifetime. But the lead frames contained a host of materials, including ivory (elephant or hippo), filed-down cow and horse teeth, brass, gold and other people's teeth –

most likely from slaves. The gnashers would have become discoloured, giving them a brown hue that could have been confused for wood.

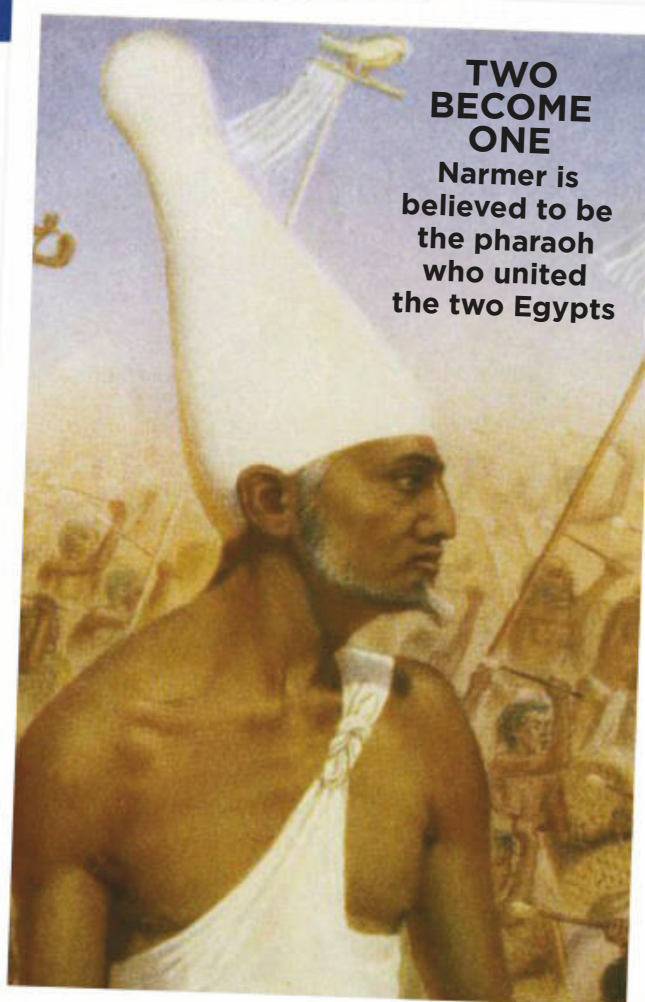
The dentures were a constant source of discomfort and pain. Washington's famed expression of stoicism and composure seen in his portrait is thought to have been a result of him clamping his spring-loaded dentures together.



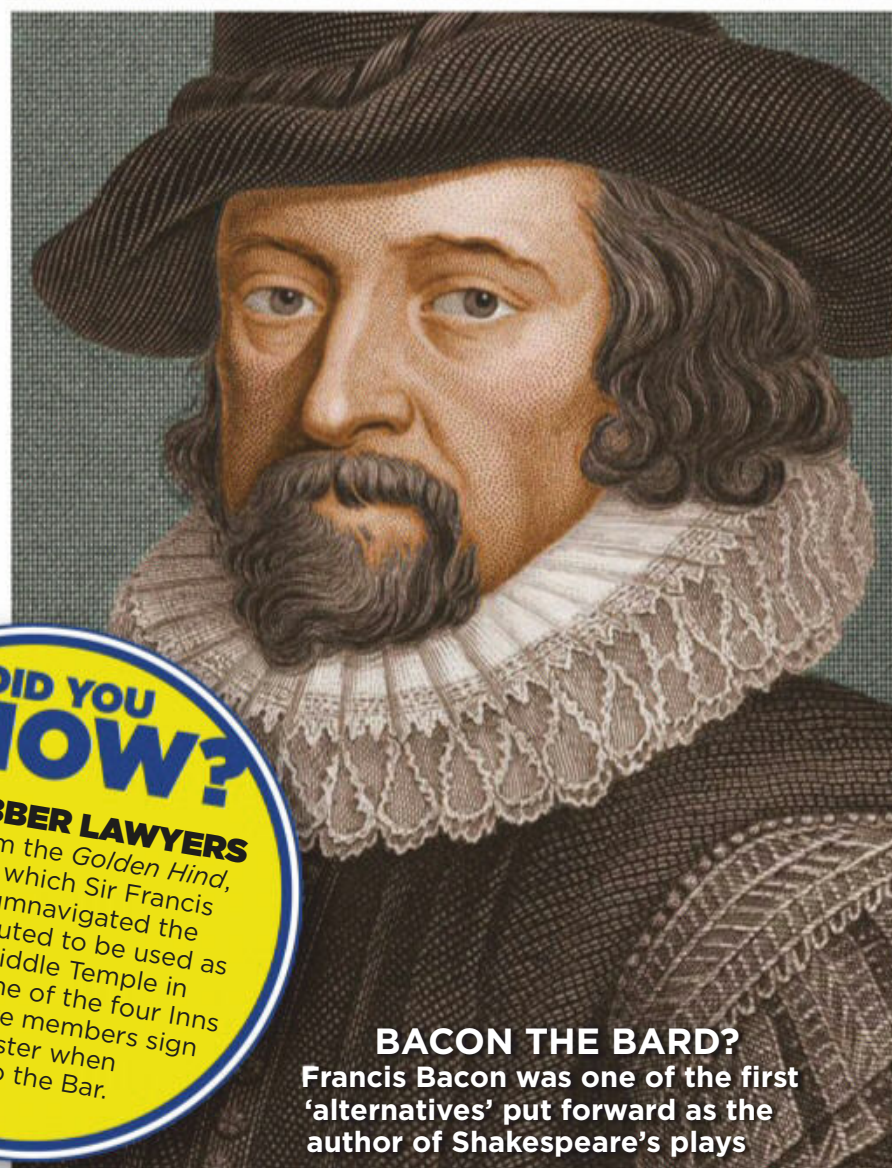
TOOTH AND FLAW
In Washington's case, his bite was probably worse than his bark

When were the two Egypts joined together?

Target Before it became the Ancient Egypt we know – spanning almost 3,000 years and 30 dynasties – the land was split into two kingdoms. Rather confusingly, their names referred to the flow of the Nile, so Lower Egypt covered the north, while Upper Egypt ran south to the border of modern Sudan. The two kingdoms had different rulers until c3100 BC, when Upper Egyptian Pharaoh Narmer, also known as Menes, defeated his rival. To mark the union, the crowns of each kingdom – the white hedjet of Upper Egypt and the red deshret of Lower – were combined to make a double crown, the pschent.



TWO BECOME ONE
Narmer is believed to be the pharaoh who united the two Egypts



BACON THE BARD?
Francis Bacon was one of the first 'alternatives' put forward as the author of Shakespeare's plays

HOW DID FRANCIS BACON DIE?

Target Francis Bacon – not the face-distorting artist of the 20th century, the other one – had quite a career. He was a lawyer, philosopher, essayist and Lord Chancellor, but more pertinently as far as his death is concerned, a scientific pioneer who advocated for experimentation and evidence. While travelling near Highgate, London, during a snowy March in 1626, Bacon had the brainwave of using freezing conditions to preserve meat. With his commitment to empiricism, he stopped his carriage, bought a chicken from a local person and stuffed it with snow and ice from the ground. The experiment was sensible enough, but Bacon caught a severe cold, which developed into bronchitis. He died on 9 April – a martyr to scientific method.



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**SPECIAL
EDITION**



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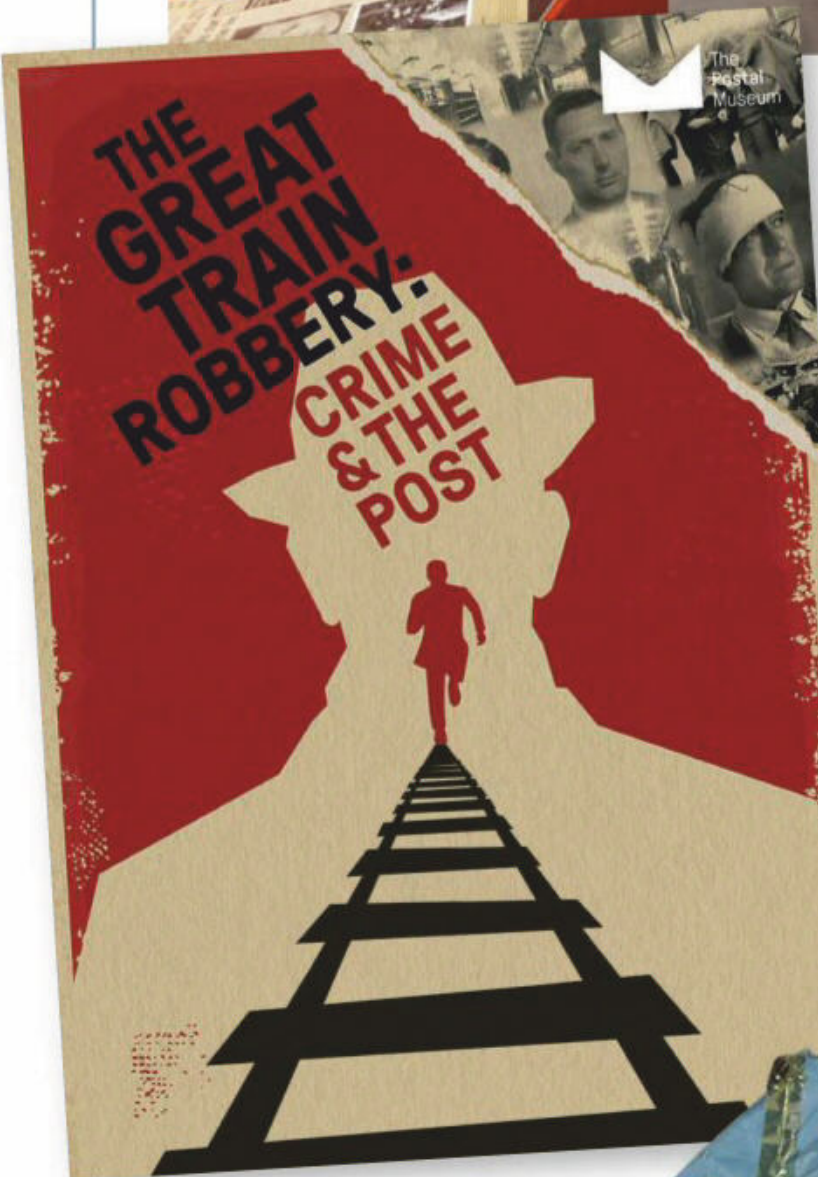
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ON OUR RADAR

A guide to what's happening in
the world of history over
the coming weeks



Learn how the Post Office's investigation department pieced together the crime



ABOVE: The exhibition poster
RIGHT: 'High value packets' retrieved from the Great Train Robbery crime scene



EXHIBITION

The Great Train Robbery: Crime & The Post

11 October 2019 to April 2020, The Postal Museum, London, www.postalmuseum.org/the-great-train-robbery-crime-and-the-post

The Great Train Robbery of 1963 was one of the most daring and talked about crimes of the century. A gang of 15 men stole £2.6 million from a Royal Mail train in Buckinghamshire, while it was heading to London from Glasgow. The train driver was attacked with a metal bar and never fully recovered from his injuries. The Postal Museum will be delving into the investigation of this audacious crime – follow the stories of the victims, discover how the police cracked the case and see a recreation of the gang's hideout.

WHAT'S ON

King Henry's
Christmas court p85



TV & RADIO

Our pick of this month's
history programmes...p86



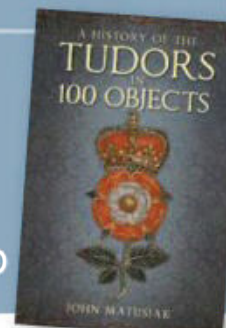
BRITAIN'S TREASURES

Stirling Castle p88



BOOK REVIEWS

Our look at
the best new
releases....p90







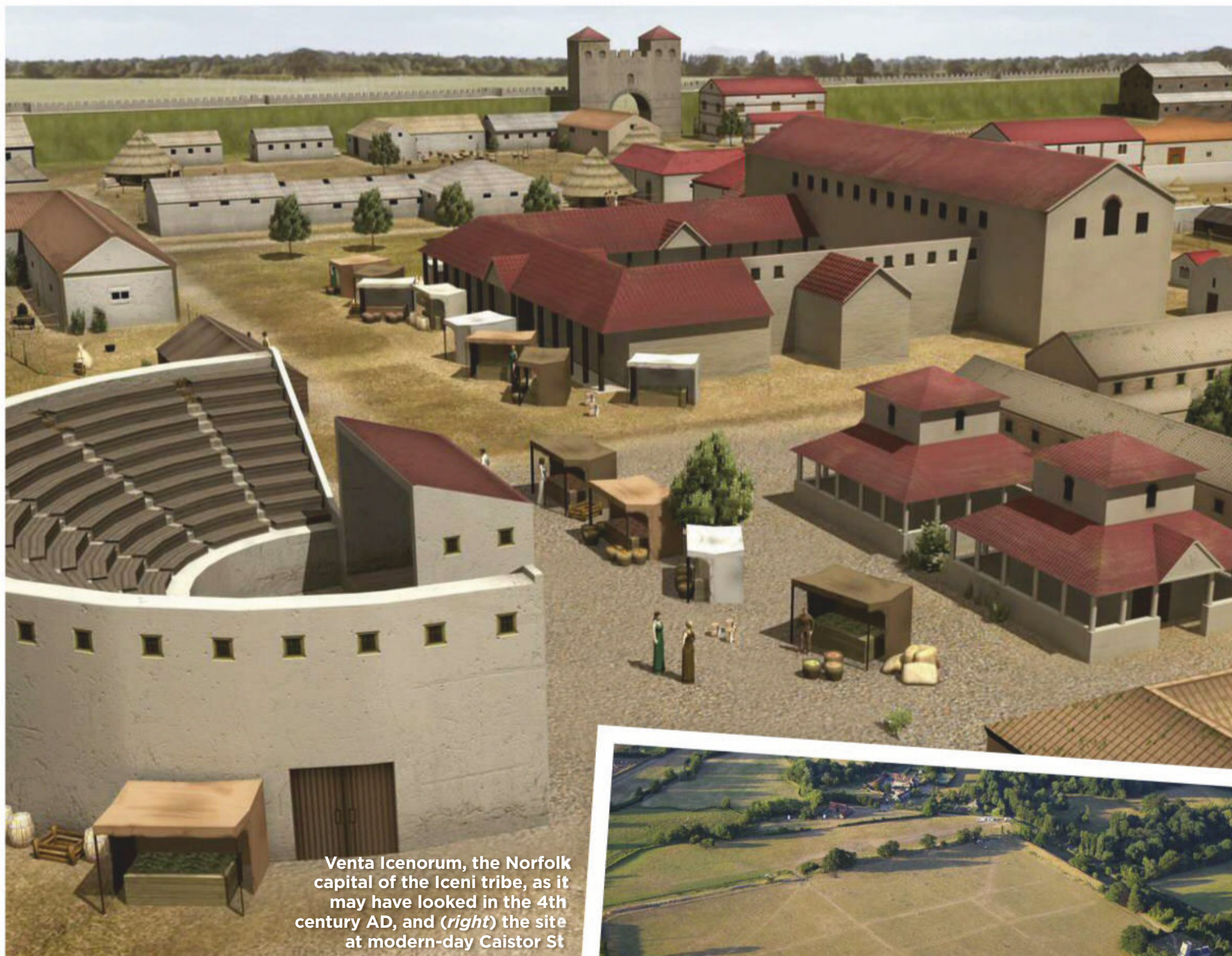
EVENT

A Docklands Christmas Carol

7, 8, 14 and 15 December, London Docklands Museum,
www.museumoflondon.org.uk

Travel back in time to Victorian London and watch the classic festive tale *A Christmas Carol* come to life. This immersive event, suitable for all the family, follows Charles Dickens's beloved tale of friendly ghosts who try to persuade the miserable Ebenezer Scrooge to change his ways. Performances are free but ticketed, with three showings throughout the day.

MUSEUM OF LONDON



Venta Icenorum, the Norfolk capital of the Iceni tribe, as it may have looked in the 4th century AD, and (right) the site at modern-day Caistor St



TALK

After Boudicca: Being Roman in the Land of the Iceni

Monday 16 December, 1-2pm, Djanogly Theatre, Nottingham, bit.ly/3251WeQ

Dr Will Bowden from the Department of Archaeology at the University of Nottingham will be giving a talk on what life was like in Roman Britain after the AD 60 revolt led by Boudicca, leader of the Iceni tribe. Using his own excavation experience, Dr Bowden will explore the complex relationship between the Iceni and the Roman invaders.



The forum was the beating heart of a Roman town



Party like a royal with Henry VIII

EVENT

King Henry's Christmas Court

21-23 December, The Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth,
<https://maryrose.org>

Travel back to 1544 and experience a Tudor Christmas. Henry VIII and wife number six, Catherine Parr, will be hosting a feast full of dancing, merriment and the fearsome king himself. The King's courtiers will be on hand to teach traditional Tudor dances and etiquette, while the court jester will be trying his best to keep you entertained – and his head on his body.

OPENING

New Tunnels Open at Charlestown

Charlestown Shipwreck Museum, Cornwall,
www.shipwreckcharlestown.co.uk

The Charlestown Shipwreck museum has recently opened a new section of its underground tunnels – remnants of its former role in the china clay industry. Visitors can now access the complete passageways used in the early 1900s to store china clay before it was transferred to the harbour. The original cart tracks are still visible as well as white dust from the clay.

The museum houses the largest private collection of shipwreck artefacts in Europe and the shop has many *Poldark*-themed gifts – which is appropriate, as Charlestown Harbour doubled for Truro in the recent BBC series.



EXHIBITION

Changing Times: Humour and Satire

28 October 2019 to 28 February 2020, Enginuity, Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Telford,
www.ironbridge.org.uk/events/family-events/changing-times-humour-and-satire

From the mid-18th century in Britain, satirical cartoons and prints became commonplace as people poked fun at new technology, strange fashion and even the royal family. These drawings give us a wealth of information about attitudes at the time as well as what people of the past found funny. Original drawings, books and songs like those above will be on display, and visitors will have the opportunity to take their own satirical photographs.

EXHIBITION

Compassion in Crisis

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow,
until 31 January, www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/kelvingrove-art-gallery-and-museum

For more than eight decades, the Royal Voluntary Service has been helping the people of Glasgow – from supporting the Home Front during World War II to assisting emergency services during the Lockerbie disaster. This community exhibition will take a look at how the organisation was founded and how it has played a vital role in many lives across the city.



The exhibition explores 80 years of voluntary service in Glasgow

▶ ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- ▶ **Preparing a Victorian Christmas** – Explore a historic kitchen preparing a festive banquet. Audley End House, Essex, weekends from 30 November to 22 December, bit.ly/34fGRQi
- ▶ **British Museum Sleepover: Troy** – Enjoy a night at the British Museum, learn how to be an ancient soldier and get up close with the new Troy exhibition. The British Museum, London, 14 -15 December, bit.ly/36iejre

TV AND RADIO

The hottest documentaries, podcasts and period dramas

Playing with the toys is all well and good, but their value skyrockets if they are still in their original packaging



**ONE
TO
WATCH**

SMALL FORTUNES

Toy Empire: The British Force Behind Star Wars Toys

BBC Four, scheduled for December

Not so long ago, in Coalville, Leicestershire, toymaker Palitoy began work on a new range. These were figures and spaceships to tie in with a movie, *Star Wars*. The film, of course, was a runaway success. Good news for George Lucas, who owned the merchandising rights and would use some of the proceeds to help fund further films.

David Whiteley traces the story of the toys, historically important among other reasons for the way the small size of *Star Wars* figures, at 3.75 inches tall, made it easier to create vehicles at scale than it was for, say, Action Man. He also explores how the toys have been, for some, a canny investment. "One collector we speak to

paid £5 for a box of figures in the 1980s," says Whiteley. "That box is now worth £17,000. His entire collection of Palitoy *Star Wars* toys is worth 'seven figures!'"

And there's always room for more toys. "Not to give too much away, but for the filming I too have been turned into a figure," says Whiteley.



Lucy Worsley gets set to sing some favourite carols

MUSICAL HISTORY

Lucy Worsley's Christmas Carol Odyssey

BBC Four, scheduled for December

Taking the long view, the idea of the Christmas carol as a traditional part of the Christmas festivities couldn't be further from the truth. Indeed, as Lucy Worsley discovers in a one-off documentary, the Puritans frowned upon the idea of such pagan-era singalongs – and even wanted to ban Christmas altogether. Closer to the present day, Worsley hears the story behind 'Silent Night' and its association with the unofficial Christmas truce of 1914. With music by the Kingdom Choir and Hampton Court Choir.

HOME FROM HOME

Three Pounds In My Pocket

BBC Radio 4, scheduled for Friday 6 December

Thanks to currency controls, Indians emigrating to the UK in the 1950s were allowed to bring the equivalent of just £50. Yet, as the returning *Three Pounds In My Pocket* explores, many who made the journey were firmly established by the 1980s. Indeed, this was the decade they truly acknowledged they weren't ever going to return to Asia to live. The series, hosted by Kavita Puri, also explores a cultural awakening within the British Asian community, and asks why some in the community moved politically towards Margaret Thatcher in 1987.

Former Time Lord
Peter Capaldi takes on
the role of Dolben

MIDWINTER CHILL

Martin's Close

BBC Four, scheduled for December

Medievalist MR James (1862-1936) was so well regarded by his peers that he became vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Yet it wasn't in the halls of academia where James found lasting fame, but as a master – *the* master, many would say – of the ghost story. Perhaps because they're crisp enough to take you back to the idea of Christmas as a festival to mark the shortest day, these are stories that seem to have a strong affinity with the Yuletide season. It's accordingly no real surprise to find Mark Gatiss (*The League Of Gentlemen*, *Sherlock*), a man steeped in English gothic, adapting and directing James's *Martin's Close*.

The 30-minute drama stars Peter Capaldi as the lawyer Dolben, who in 1684 defends squire John Martin (Wilf Scolding) when he is accused of killing a young woman. Facing him is an infamous hanging judge, George Jeffreys (Elliot Levey). But this is no straightforward case, not least because the victim has been seen since her death...



DREAMING OF REDEMPTION

A Christmas Carol

BBC One, scheduled for December

The tale of Ebenezer Scrooge's dark night of the soul is a Christmas staple, central to the Victorian reinvention of the festive season. Yet familiarity doesn't lessen the power of Charles Dickens's classic morality tale, which also makes it endlessly rife for reinvention. Enter writer Steven Knight, the creator of *Peaky Blinders*, whose three-part take on *A Christmas Carol* is the first in what will be a series of adaptations of Dickens's work, and which we're promised will be "haunting, hallucinatory, and spine-tingling".

Heading the cast as Scrooge is Guy Pearce, while a starry supporting cast includes Andy Serkis as the Ghost of Christmas Past, Stephen Graham as Jacob Marley and Jason Flemyng as the Ghost of Christmas Future.



Guy Pearce stars as the almost-incorrigible miser



Charles I, who was executed by republicans

REVOLUTIONARY ACT

Charles I: To Kill a King

BBC Four, scheduled for December

On 30 January 1649, Charles I was executed, beheaded outside the Banqueting House in Whitehall. Yet as late as Christmas 1648, few would have anticipated the King meeting such a fate, or the establishment of a republic. Following on from *Charles I: Downfall Of A King*, Lisa Hilton looks in detail at the Stuart monarch's last days. The three part-series also explores whether the execution was a necessary reaction to despotism, or a brutal mistake enacted by extremists.

▶ ALSO LOOK OUT FOR

- ▶ On 3 December, PBS America celebrate's Dan Snow's birthday with a day of his shows, including *The Vikings Uncovered* and *Locomotion: Dan Snow's History Of The Railways*.
- ▶ *Revolution, 30 Years On* (BBC Radio 4, scheduled for Monday 23 December), Tessa Dunlop looks back at the fall of Nicolae Ceaușescu in 1989.



Though it stands atop an imposing crag (left) Stirling Castle been lost and won myriad times in its chequered history



THE BALL'S IN HER COURT

The world's oldest football – made of pig's bladder and dating to the 1540s – was found at Stirling Castle during renovation work on a room once used by Mary, Queen of Scots. She is thought to have been a fan of the sport.

BRITAIN'S TREASURES...

STIRLING CASTLE Scotland

As one of Scotland's foremost fortresses, Stirling has witnessed some of the country's greatest events – changing hands many times throughout its tumultuous history

GETTING THERE

Stirling Castle is in central Stirling and the town is easily reached from the M9. Follow the signs for the castle. The castle is easily accessible from the local train and bus stations by foot.



OPENING TIMES AND PRICES

1 April to 30 September, open 9.30am until 6pm, 1 October to 31 March open until 5 pm. Adults £16, children £9.60 – tickets booked online can be cheaper.

FIND OUT MORE

www.stirlingcastle.scot

Stirling Castle sits in what might be described as a classic position – atop a volcanic outcrop offering commanding views, providing its masters with dominion over the route into the Highlands. The first written record of the castle comes from c1110, when Scottish King Alexander I dedicated a chapel here. It is thought it was a preferred royal residence at this time.

It was William the Lion who first surrendered the castle to the English – he was forced to hand it over to Henry II as part of his ransom, after he suffered the ignomy of being captured in Northumbria during the Battle of

Alnwick in 1174 – but Stirling was returned to Scottish hands a few years later, when Richard I sold it back to fund his crusades in the Holy Land. By the 1260s, the castle was again one of the favoured residences of the Scottish crown and a deer hunting park was added by Alexander III.

Edward I, the so-called Hammer of the Scots, came knocking in 1296. English forces arrived at Stirling Castle to find that the garrison had fled. They held it for just a year, with the Scottish retaking the castle following England's defeat at Stirling Bridge in 1297. Over the course of the next 50 years, it would change

hands eight times during the Wars of Independence.

Edward I marched on Stirling in 1304. He took more than a dozen siege engines with him including Warwolf, believed to be the largest trebuchet ever built. This terrifying machine saw the castle swiftly fall to the English yet again.

By 1314, Robert the Bruce was King of Scotland and Stirling was one of only a handful of Scottish castles under English control. Now it precipitated one of the most pivotal moments in Scottish history – the Battle of Bannockburn. Robert's brother, Edward Bruce, besieged Stirling, prompting Edward II to head north. Robert



WHAT TO LOOK FOR...



1 THE STIRLING TAPESTRIES

James V had a large collection of tapestries, all now lost. In 2000, a project began to create similar examples, the last of which was unveiled in 2015.



2 THE CHAPEL ROYAL

Built in just seven months, in 1594, for the baptism of James VI's son Henry, the chapel was one of the first protestant kirks in Scotland.



4 THE STIRLING HEADS

These 16th-century wooden roundels depict figures from the Bible, Classical mythology, as well as Scottish history.



5 THE GREAT KITCHENS

Visitors can see what life was like for those who had to toil in the hot, exhausting environments in which royal feasts were prepared.



3 THE GREAT HALL

This banqueting hall was the scene of a feast so lavish, for Prince Henry's baptism, that it included a model ship with firing cannon.

“William the Lion handed it over as part of his ransom”

rode to meet him and, on 23 and 24 June – and in spite of being outnumbered in the region of two to one – won a famous victory. In the aftermath, Robert ordered that the castle to be slighted (partially destroyed) so it could never again be used against him.

Fast forward to 1336, however, and the now ruined castle was back under English control and partly rebuilt, though it returned to Scottish hands again in 1342, when the future Robert II of Scotland retook it following a siege. The oldest parts of the current castle, including the North Gate, date back to his reign.

MURDER MOST FOUL


The castle would remain a Scottish possession from here

on, becoming a favoured royal residence once more, and the site of several royal births and coronations. But that didn't bring an end to its bloody history. In 1452, William, 8th Earl of Douglas, was assassinated here by James II and his courtiers. He was stabbed multiple times and thrown from a window because the King was concerned that the Douglas clan was becoming too powerful and that William was plotting against him.

Around 1540, in the reign of James V, work began on the magnificent royal palace that stands at Stirling Castle today. Mary, Queen of Scots was crowned in the castle chapel in 1543, and she subsequently spent much of her time in Scotland at Stirling.

More than £13,000 was spent on renovating the castle in 1617, when James VI and I – for whom the castle was childhood home – returned to visit.

The castle came under siege twice more, during the British Civil Wars in 1651 and again during the Jacobite risings in 1746, on which occasion Charles Edward Stuart unsuccessfully tried to take Stirling before being defeated at Culloden.

Stirling Castle was used as an army barracks during the wars with revolutionary France and, in 1849, Queen Victoria became the first reigning monarch to visit since 1650. The castle served as a military depot for the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders for over a hundred years until 1964. 

WHY NOT VISIT...

Other historical sites found close to Stirling

THE NATIONAL WALLACE MEMORIAL

Overlooking the scene of the battle of Stirling Bridge, this landmark commemorates Scottish hero William Wallace. www.nationalwallacemonument.com

FORTH BRIDGE

This late 19th-century structure crosses the Firth of Forth and is the world's second-longest single cantilever bridge, with two spans of 521 metres. www.theforthbridges.org

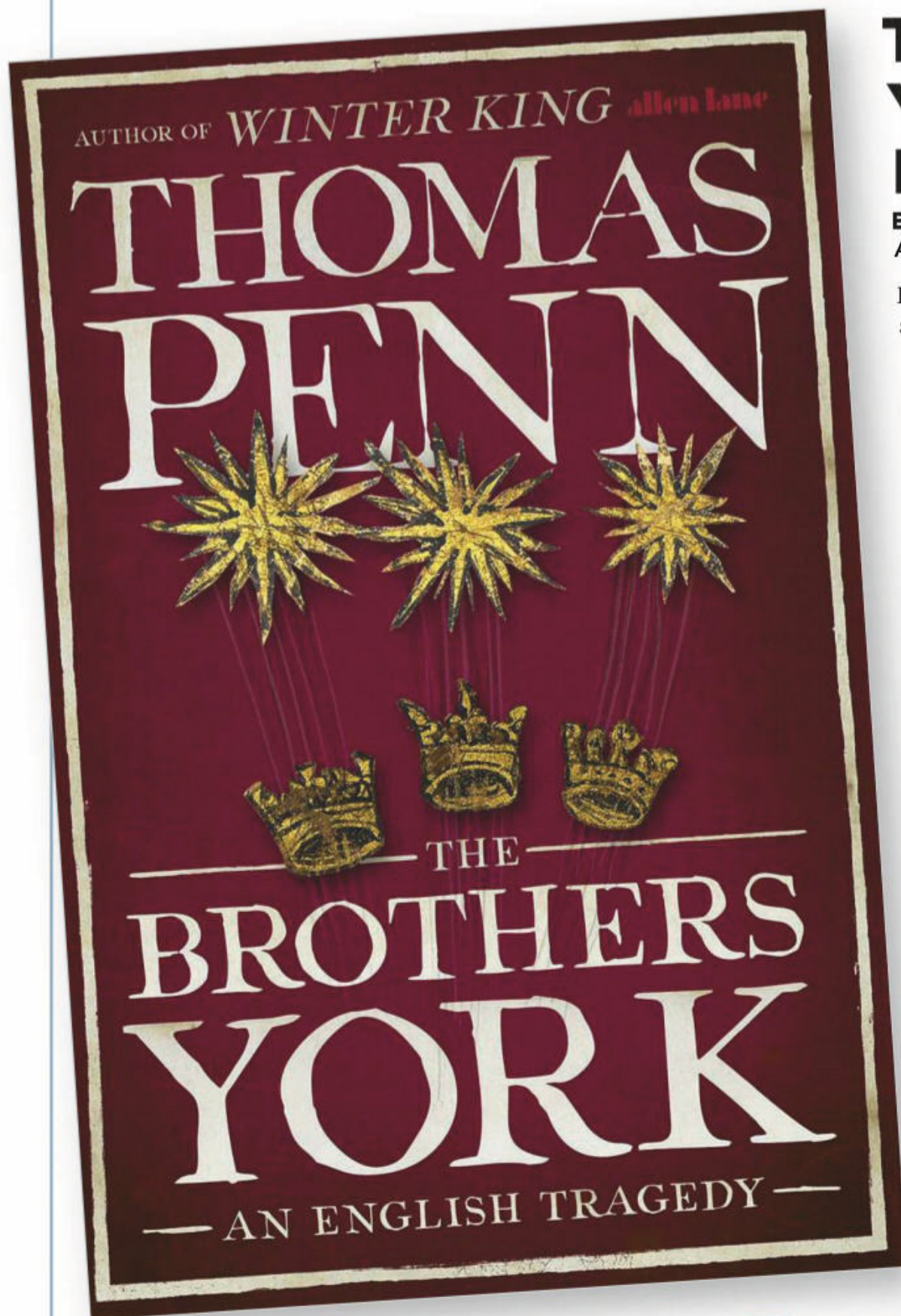
THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN VISITOR CENTRE

Witness the climactic battle in 3D and discover where Robert the Bruce raised his banner. www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/bannockburn

BOOKS

This month's best historical reads

**BOOK
OF THE
MONTH**



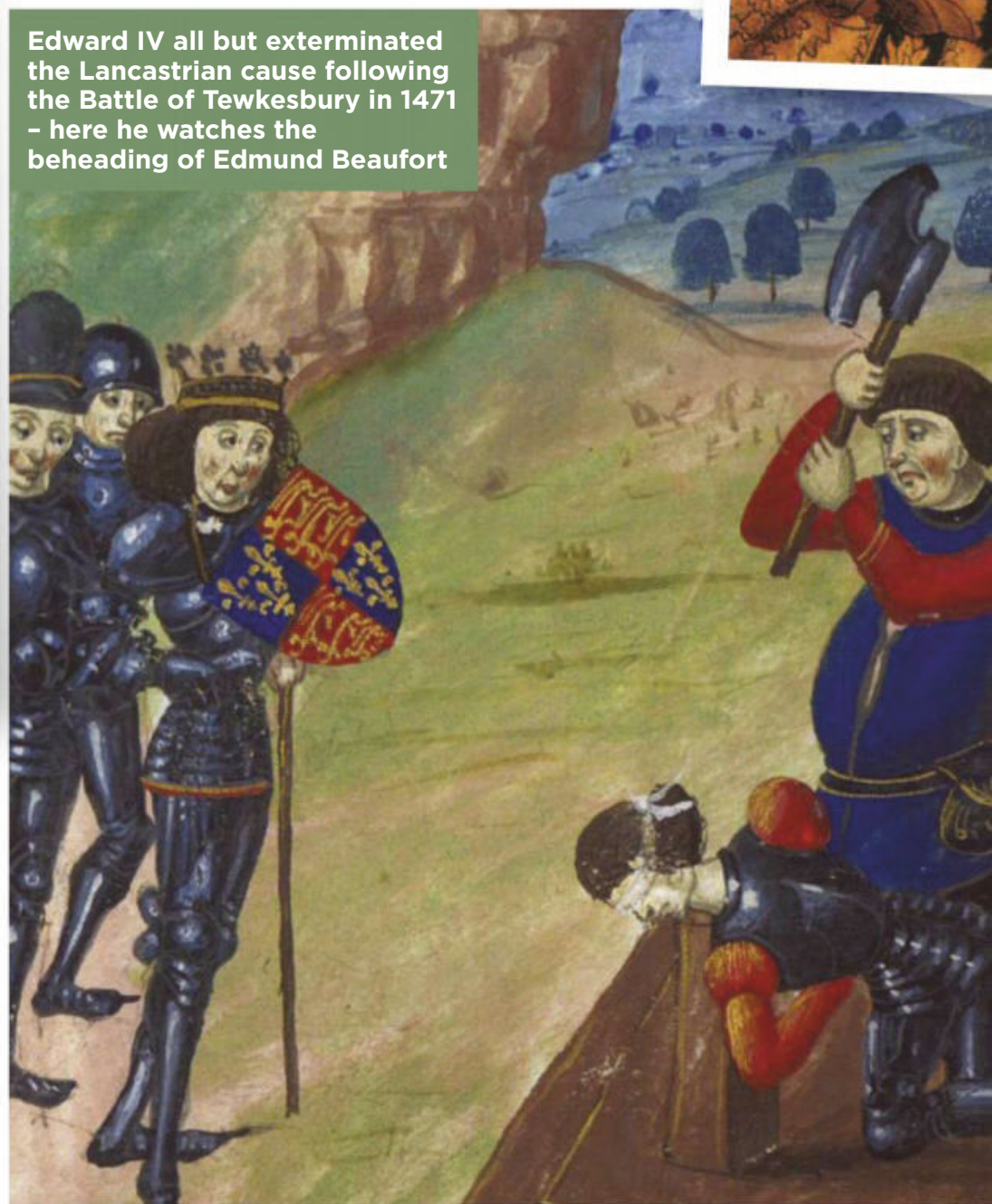
The Brothers York: An English Tragedy

By Thomas Penn

Allen Lane, £30, hardback, 688 pages

England, the late 15th century. The nation is riven by a series of a bloody civil wars, fought by men from different royal houses vying for control of its throne. It is into this febrile landscape that Thomas Penn's gripping new book plunges, guiding readers from 1461's Battle of Towton to Richard III's defeat at Bosworth 24 years later. What happens in-between is often complex, as factions vie using whatever methods they can – betrayal and backstabbing are never far away. Yet, at its heart, this is a biography of three brothers, Edward, George and Richard, and the vast political fallout of their personal animosity.

Edward IV all but exterminated the Lancastrian cause following the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 – here he watches the beheading of Edmund Beaufort



“At its heart, this is a biography of three brothers and the vast political fallout of their personal animosity”

"Edward IV was a king of flawed, compulsive magnificence," says Penn



MEET THE AUTHOR

Thomas Penn argues that we should consider the Wars of the Roses as not only York versus Lancaster, but also as the house of York at war with itself

You write that “the rise and fall of the house of York remains one of the seductive and contested stories in English history”. Why do you think this is?

It's one of the most extreme examples of political self-destruction in English history. Contemporaries viewed events in appalled disbelief, and the story has since provided a rich seam for writers and dramatists. But what also gives the story of the house of York an added resonance is the context: a deeply unstable political environment; an England that – having lost its French colonies – was struggling to reassert itself on the European stage, and was in a state of something approaching existential crisis, with the idea of hereditary monarchy itself thrown into question. Above all, the slowly disintegrating relationship between the three extraordinary characters at the heart of this story is pure box office.

You focus on the three Yorkist brothers. What did you make of their characters?

In the surviving written record, Edward, George and Richard are elusive, flickering presences. But it is possible to recover a sense of what drove them to act in the ways they did. Edward IV was a king of flawed, compulsive magnificence, a narcissist whose excesses and contradictions provoked admiration and disgust in contemporaries. Clarence was petulant, impressionable and brittle: his rebellion against Edward was catalysed by a sense that the vast fortune his brother had bestowed upon him could be snatched away from him at any moment (as well, undoubtedly, as teenage immaturity). Richard, I think, was both an idealist and an ideologue: someone who craved order and stability in a deeply uncertain world. When he became king, those ideals disintegrated on contact with reality – with tragic consequences.

What were the key events that led them to turn on each other?

Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was a key catalyst. It had the effect of destabilising the marriage market, while the pot of royal favour had to be spread more thinly. For Clarence, reliant on royal favour, this only increased his sense of precariousness – coupled with Edward's refusal to let him marry the older daughter of Richard, Earl of Warwick – the 'Kingmaker'. Warwick was key in leading Clarence into rebellion against Edward in 1469; later, he was equally influential from beyond the grave, with Clarence and Richard, each marrying one of Warwick's daughters, at each others' throats for

control of the late earl's vast inheritance. Then Edward IV's unexpected death in 1483, leaving his 12-year-old son as heir, triggered a new wave of instability. Nobody, perhaps, felt more uneasy at this time than Richard – but he profited from this moment too.

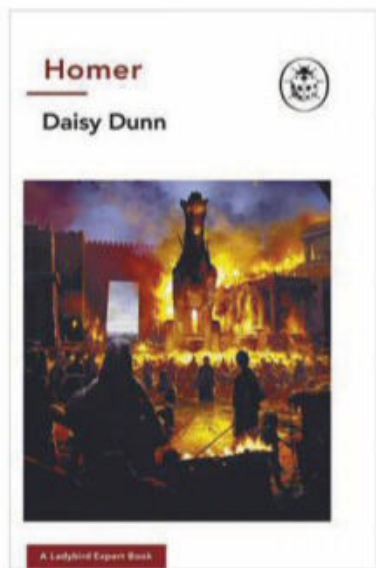


“The relationship between the three brothers is pure box office”

How would you like your book to change how readers view the Wars of the Roses?

Despite everything, we find it difficult to move past the Tudor view of this conflict – one of two warring houses, finally brought together and united in the glorious Tudor “rose both red and white”. In 1461, the year Edward IV came to the throne, the conflict did briefly crystallise in this

way: Towton, the most brutal battle ever fought on English soil, was undoubtedly a face-off between the two families. But I don't think it's been fully acknowledged how, in the decades that followed, things changed. Rather than being a war between two families, I think we need to see it more as one family – the house of York – at war with itself. It's this internecine conflict that prevented the house of York being the dynasty that ultimately the Tudors would become. And that's its tragedy.

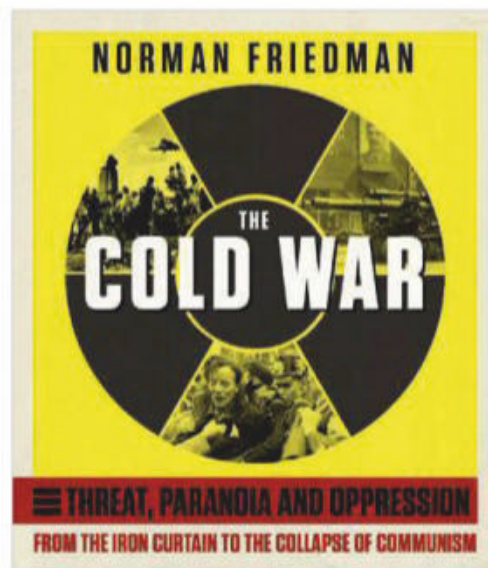


Homer

By Daisy Dunn

Michael Joseph, £8.99, hardback, 56 pages

The Ladybird Expert series continues to tackle admirably remote subjects with this look at the life and work of enigmatic, ancient author Homer. His stories of the Trojan War and the later journey home of legendary king Odysseus may be just that – stories – but here they're brought evocatively to life. As well as a guide to their epic plots, there's also explorations of their themes, inspirations, and subsequent legacies.

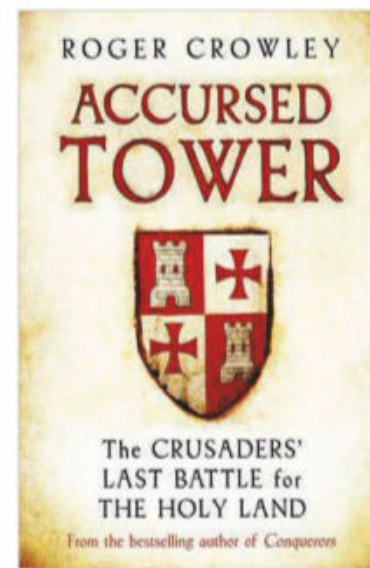


The Cold War

By Norman Friedman

Andre Deutsch, £7.99, paperback, 128 pages

Part of a new series of Compact Guides, this pocket-size book offers an overview of an enormous, continent-spanning history: the Cold War, whose geopolitical tensions gripped much of the world between the 1950s and 1980s. Told through short chapters, studded with timelines, profiles of key players and introductions to the technology and society of the time, it's a great overview of a complex subject.

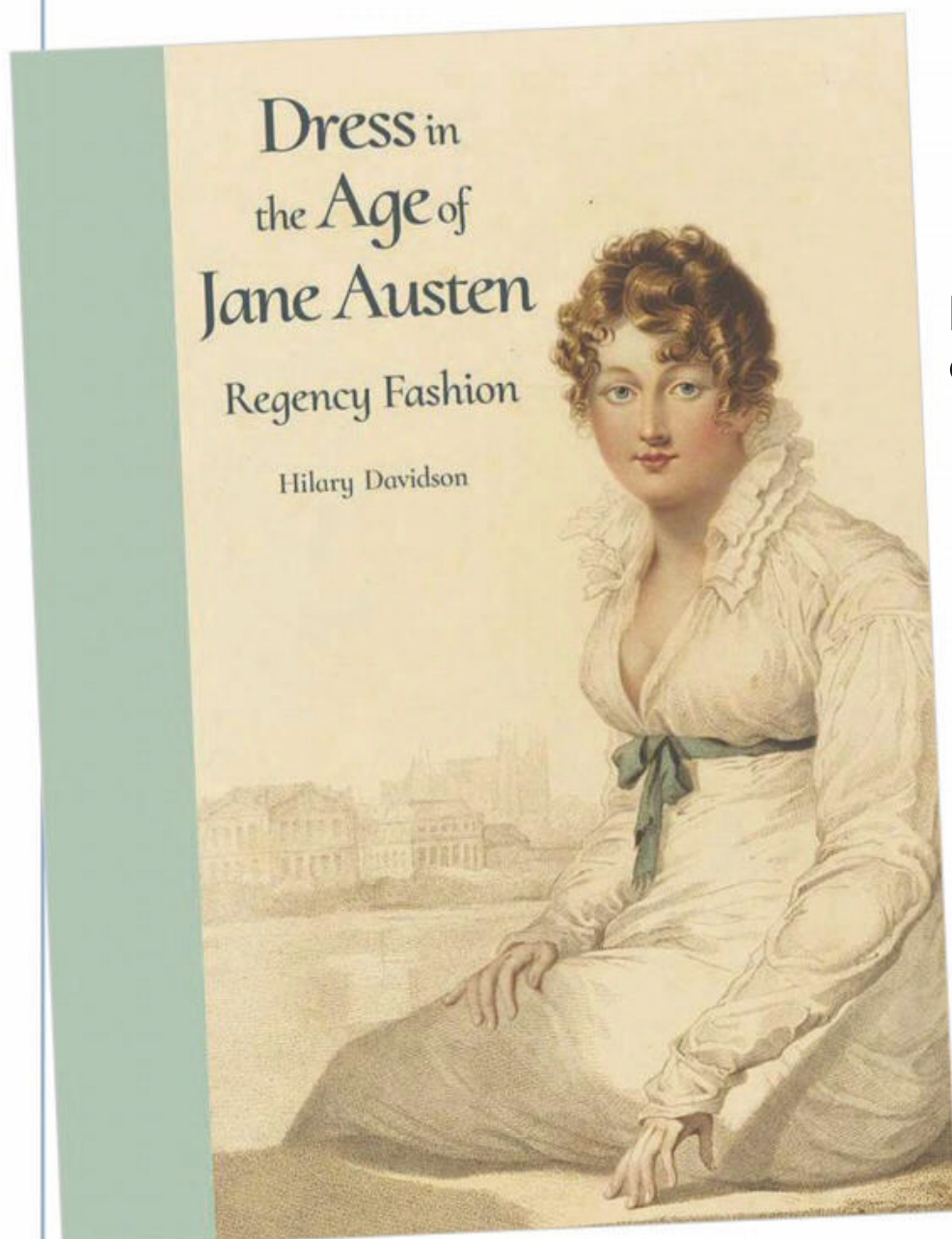


Accursed Tower: The Crusaders' Last Battle for the Holy Land

By Roger Crowley

Yale, £20, hardback, 256 pages

Confused by the Crusades? Don't fear: this pacy account narrows the focus down to a single, pivotal moment: 1291's siege of Acre. Offering a vivid account of the key events and players, as well as the lead-up and legacy, it's as strong on the tactics used as it is their bloody results. And what results they were, the Crusaders forced out of a devastated city. Gripping stuff.

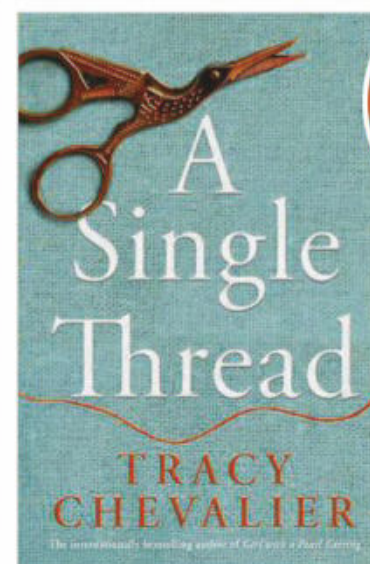


Dress in the Age of Jane Austen: Regency Fashion

By Hilary Davidson

Yale, £30, hardback, 336 pages

One element of our ongoing fascination with the worlds brought to life by Jane Austen is their social strictures: how you might be allowed to talk, act and appear. As the author of this elegant book notes, dress is a nuanced social marker, and navigating its rules would have been essential in the Regency period. Divided by location – home, village, city, country – and with colourful images throughout, this is a great study of who wore what and why.



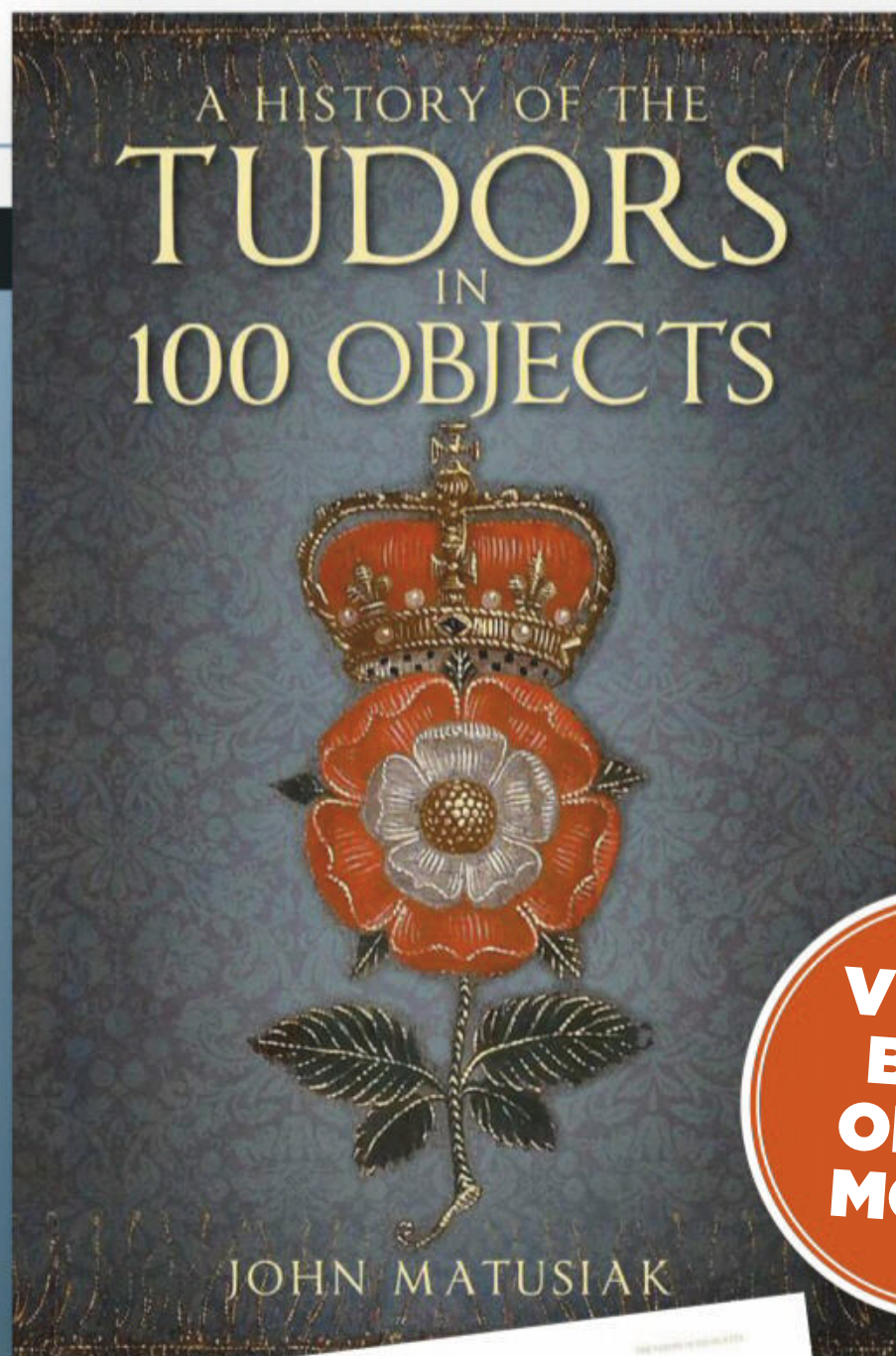
HISTORICAL FICTION

A Single Thread

By Tracy Chevalier

The Borough Press, £14.99, hardback, 352 pages

As Tracy Chevalier's new novel opens, World War I has been over for more than a decade – but its emotional devastation still lingers in the life of Violet Speedwell, a so-called 'surplus woman' left single by the conflict. Chevalier, author of *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, follows Violet as she finds a sense of belonging among a cathedral community in Winchester. And then another war looms...



A History of the Tudors in 100 Objects

By John Matusiak

The History Press, £14.99, paperback, 352 pages

Delve into the world of the Tudors with this look at the period's physical objects – and what a diverse selection it is. Beds, shoes, trees, chimneys, dolls and garderobes: all feature here, split into thematic sections from birth and work to war and death. Cunningly, they also chart the era's dynamic history, forged at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 and culminating in the self-confidence of Elizabeth I's reign.

**VISUAL
BOOK
OF THE
MONTH**

“These objects chart the era's history, forged at the Battle of Bosworth”



Each of the objects, ranging from the magnificent to the macabre, is given an extensive write up setting its place in history



Christmas

ALWAYS STARTS WITH

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READERS' LETTERS

Get in touch – share your opinions on history and our magazine



ON THE BEACH

The leading man in this image of Sword Beach on D-Day in 1944 is James Graney, stepfather-in-law to reader Neville Milby

FAMILY PHOTO

The leading man with the Combined Operations 'flash' on his right shoulder, pictured in the Letters pages of your August 2019 issue, is actually my wife's stepfather, James Graney.

I remember James telling me that he and his fellow soldiers were among the first wave ashore on Sword Beach on D-Day, and that their job was to "clear the beaches". He also said that, for a number of days following D-Day, they were afraid of being thrown back into the sea.

James was later posted to the Far East and was one of the party of Marines who liberated Changi Prison in Singapore after Japan surrendered. He died in September 2003.

✉ **Neville Milby,**
Wellington, New Zealand

Editor's reply

Many thanks for your email, Neville. Reader Suzanne Burdfield also recognised one of the men from the photograph. Perhaps other readers will be able to put more names to the faces of these brave soldiers.

DEFYING DECOMPOSITION

One reason for St Anthony of Padua's preserved tongue (Father, Son and Holy Goat?, November 2019) might very well be his diet. Foods in medieval Europe, specifically meat, included a lot of salt, used especially for preserving.

St Anthony died from oedema, which causes a retention of excessive salt. As the tongue is, after all, just a thick piece of meat, in this case it may just have contained and retained enough excess salt to preserve it beyond decay. Most bodies are not exhumed, so there may very well be many other posthumous tongues in reasonably good condition.

✉ **Stefan Badham,**
Hampshire

CORRECTIONS

• In the Clash of the Samurai feature (November 2019) we incorrectly stated that the city of Heian (now Kyoto) was founded in 794 BC. It was, of course, founded in AD 794. Thanks to reader Darcy Perkins for pointing this out.

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ISSUE 76 – CHRISTMAS 2019

BBC History Revealed is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes

BBC
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EDITORIAL

Editor Charlotte Hodgman
charlotte.hodgman@immediate.co.uk
Production Editor Kev Lochun
kev.lochun@immediate.co.uk
Staff Writer
Emma Slattery Williams

ART

Art Editor Sheu-Kuei Ho
Picture Editor Rosie McPherson
Illustrators Marina Amaral

CONTRIBUTORS & EXPERTS

Rob Blackmore, Tracy Borman, Ellie Cawthorne, Matt Elton, Dan Jones, Spencer Mizen, Gordon O'Sullivan, Josette Reeves, Richard Smyth, Nige Tassell, William Tullett, Jonny Wilkes, Jonathan Wright

PRESS & PR

Communications Manager
Emma Cooney 0117 300 8507
emma.cooney@immediate.co.uk

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager Helen Seymour

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Group Advertising Manager
Tom Drew tom.drew@immediate.co.uk
Advertisement Manager
Sam Jones 0117 314 8847
sam.jones@immediate.co.uk
Subscriptions Director
Jacky Perales-Morris
Subscriptions Marketing Manager
Natalie Lawrence

PRODUCTION

Production Director Sarah Powell
Production Co-ordinator
Katty Skardon
Ad Co-ordinator Florence Lott
Ad Designer Julia Young
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Commercial director Jemima Dixon
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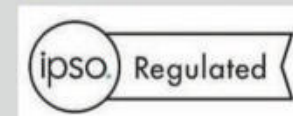
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Eva Abramik uk.publishing@bbc.com

Basic annual subscription rates

UK £64.87 Eire/Europe £67.99
ROW £69.00

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ARE YOU A WINNER?

The lucky winners of the crossword from issue 73 are:

A Anderson, Bangor
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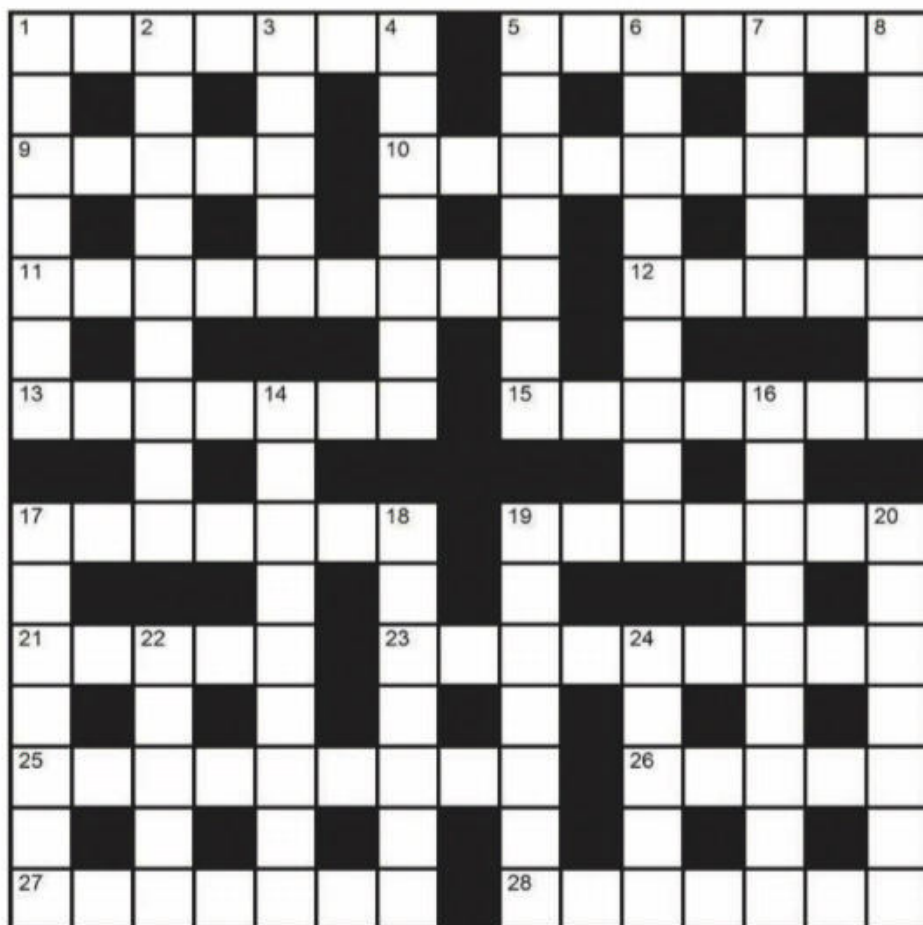
Congratulations! You've each won a copy of *Arthur and the Kings of Britain*, by Miles Russell.



CROSSWORD N° 76

Test your history knowledge to solve our puzzle – and you could win a fantastic prize

Set by Richard Smyth



ACROSS

- 1** 'I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by ____' – Allen Ginsberg, *Howl* (1956) (7)
5 B-17s or Lancasters, for example (7)
9 'Be of good ____; it is I' – the Book of Matthew (5)
10 Long-reigning British monarch (1738–1820) (6,1,1,1)
11 Revolutionary Marxist in 20th-century Russia (9)
12 The ____, trophy contested since 1882 by the English and Australian cricket teams (5)
13 Ancient language spoken in the Basque Country (7)
15 Anglo-Saxon bishop of Winchester (7)
17 Bobby ____ (1943–2008),

- US-born chess grandmaster (7)
19 *The ____*, 1959 novel by Günter Grass (3,4)
21 Henrik ____ (1828–1906), Norwegian playwright (5)
23 Code name for the US nuclear project, 1942–46 (9)
25 Traditional stories (4,5)
26 Earliest known civilisation of Mesopotamia (5)
27 Pseudonym of the crossword compiler Derrick Somerset Macnutt (1902–1971) (7)
28 Society figure in ancient Athens; lover of Pericles (7)

DOWN

- 1** Danse ____, medieval art motif also known as the Dance of Death (7)

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The competition is open to all UK residents (inc. Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry per person.

The closing date and time is as shown under **How to Enter**, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Revealed*) will only ever use personal details for the purposes of administering this competition, and will not publish them or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at www.immediatemediaco.uk/privacy-policy.

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SOLUTION N° 74



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BLUE PETER APPEAL, 1963

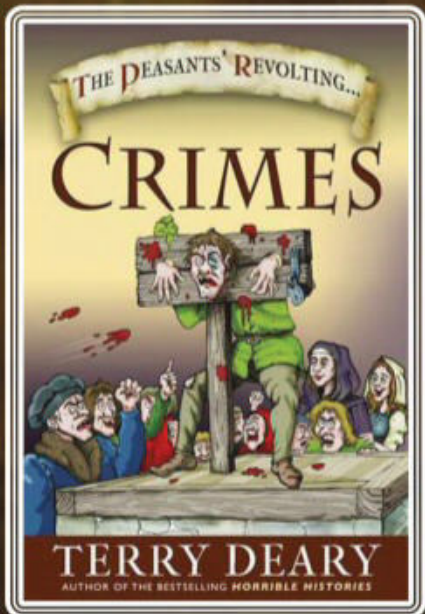
Blue Peter presenters Valerie Singleton and Christopher Trace can be seen here almost buried by the sheer number of donations that have flooded into the studio. The show – first broadcast in 1958 and the world’s longest-running children’s TV programme – has hosted a charity Christmas appeal since 1962, asking viewers to send donations that can be distributed, used to raise money or be transformed into something useful. In 1963, *Blue Peter* asked viewers to donate toys that could be given out as Christmas presents to children who would otherwise receive nothing. The show’s appeals have raised more than £100 million for charities across the world.

GETTY IMAGES

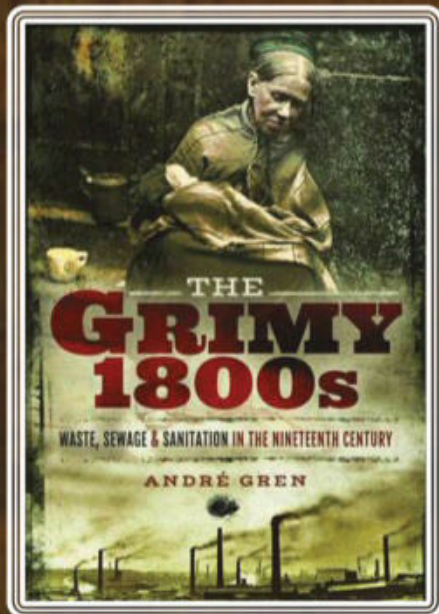
 *Blue Peter* is broadcast every Thursday at 5.30pm on CBBC. Catch-up with recent episodes on BBC iPlayer: www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b006md2v

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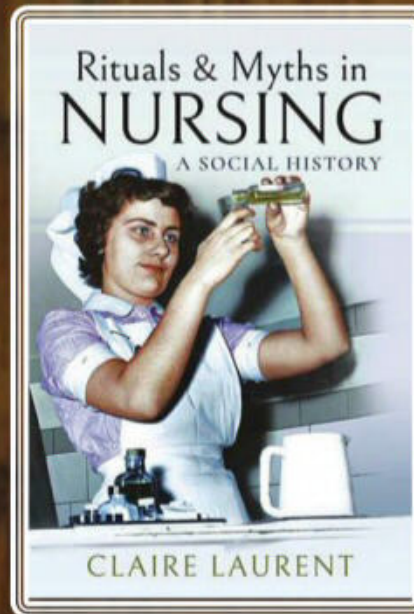
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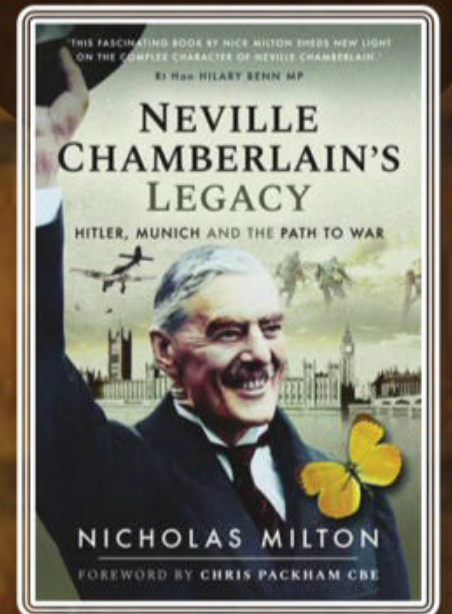
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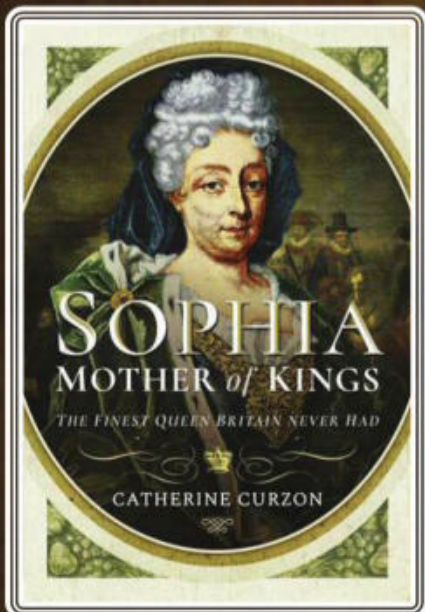
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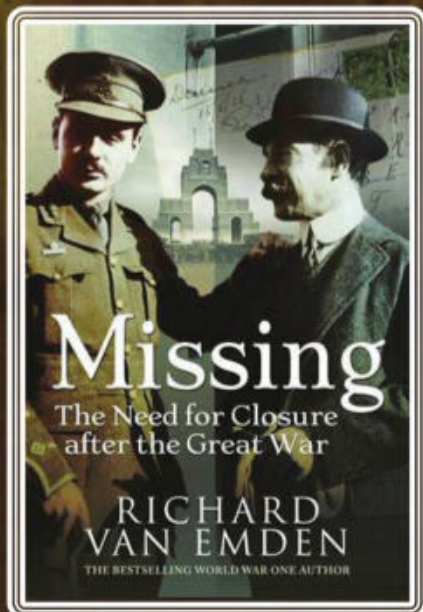
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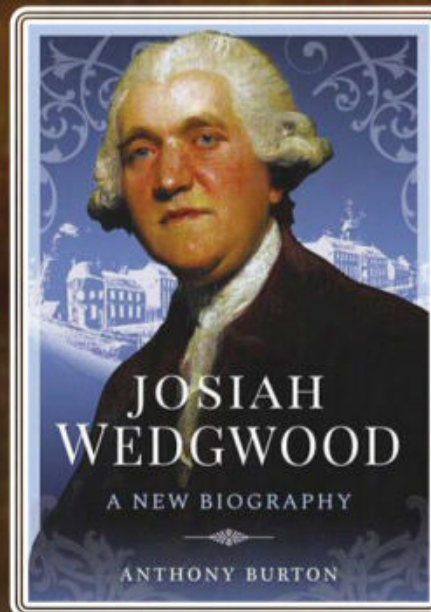
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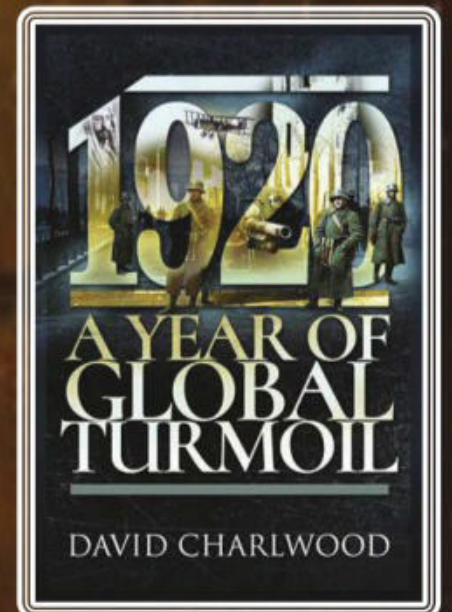
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